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If it leaves an impression then art makes its mark

IT will be a sad day when art fails to stimulate discussion about its merits among those peering at the very same piece of work.

After all, if we all found beauty and inspiration in the same things, then it would be a rather dull world full of uniformity and no motivation to push back boundaries and experiment.

Certainly the appearance of street artist Banksy's latest piece of work - daubed on a wall in Dover - last weekend has once again ignited the debate of just what makes 'art'.

The answer, of course, is that it can be pretty much anything anyone presents as just that. Plenty will disagree, but it doesn't make it any less of a piece of art.

I must admit, once upon a time I was of the opinion that art was all about a nice photo-like painting. But as I dismissed modern art, it cast its spell over me. Simply by making me think about what I had seen achieved a goal more conventional work never really achieved.

I'm still no great fan of the genre, but it is the work I most often smirk at when I first see, that I more often than not find lodged in my mind. If it makes you think then the creation is surely a success. Think that and it will change your outlook.

Banksy, of course, seems to be widely adored by everyone - a rarity in a society where anyone else armed with a spray can and decorating a wall they don't own suffers the scourn of the public and the wrath of the justice system.

He appears alone in being granted permission to create his works wherever he pleases. And if you don't see what's so good about his work, well test it against the 'did you think about it' system. Given the amount of column inches and phone-ins it spawned this week, he truly does bring art to the masses.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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HOW TO CONTACT US...

Editor: Chris Britcher
Email chris.britcher@archant.co.uk
Address: Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP
Editorial: News: 01233 653475
Sport/Leisure: 01233 653479
Email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk
Advertising:
Jobs/Notices: 01233 653461
Business: 01233 653461
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Email sales@kosmedia.co.uk
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Mackinlay still in limbo over election spending

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

ROW: Mr Mackinlay beat Nigel Farage in fiercely contested South Thanet in 2015 . Picture: ADY KERRY

PROSECUTORS say they are still considering whether to impose charges on Craig Mackinlay as they cleared a host of other Conservative candidates of wrongdoing over election expenses this week.

The Crown Prosecution Service confirmed last month it had received a file from Kent Police as part of its investigation into claims the party breached spending rules in South Thanet during the 2015 general election.

However, the CPS insists this is purely due to the short period of time it had to examine the documents, compared to those sent by other police forces in the country earlier in the year.

Nick Vamos, CPS head of special crime, said: "Although there is evidence to suggest the returns may have been inaccurate, there is insufficient evidence to prove to the criminal standard that any candidate or agent was dishonest.

"Therefore we have concluded it is not in the public interest to charge anyone referred to us with this offence.

"One file, from Kent Police, was only recently received by the CPS, and remains under consideration.

"No inference as to whether any criminal charge may or may not be authorised in relation to this file should be drawn from this fact and we will announce our decision as soon as possible once we have considered the evidence in this matter."

It is the latest development in a long-running scandal in which the Conservatives were said to have "understated" spending during campaigning on the Kent seat, where Mr Mackinlay was victorious over former Ukip leader Nigel Farage.

The row centres around claims the party recorded expenditure on hotels in Ramsgate as national spending, rather than local spending.

The Electoral Commission fined the Tories - who blamed "simple human error" - a record £70,000 earlier this year following an investigation, while the candidate was reportedly interviewed under caution for six hours about the allegations by Kent Police.

The party, and Mr Mackinlay himself, have protested innocence throughout investigations and Mr Mackinlay was this week officially selected as the Tory candidate for next month's general election.

Electric car charging points kept in bid to encourage green travel

ELECTRIC car charging points are set to be retained across Ashford and Tenterden as part of the council's bid to encourage sustainability and green travel.

Cabinet members this week agreed recommendations to retain the five double electric vehicle charging points in the borough for another three years, with no additional charge for the electricity consumed.

This means customers can continue to use the charging facilities without paying for the electricity used, but will still be required to pay for the use of the parking space by means of a permit or pay and display.

The charge points are located in select car parks across the borough including the Civic Centre, Vicarage Lane, Julie Rose Stadium, Tenterden Leisure Centre and Tenterden Station Road.

In 2013 local authorities, including Ashford, received grants from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Office to provide charging points at suitable locations.

The £237,000 funding, which Kent County Council successfully bid for, covered the majority of the installation costs for 43 charge points across the county.

The fast-charge facilities have proved successful with more than 1,800 charge sessions recorded from 2015 to 2016. Vicarage Lane and the Civic Centre car parks were shown to be the most popular locations.

Sheila Davison, head of health, parking and community safety said: "With the steady rise of electric vehicle sales, it's important that the council supports drivers who choose to assist in providing a cleaner and more sustainable borough.

"This is a positive move forward for the council that will ultimately enhance the eco-friendly credentials of the borough, and supports other steps we are taking to reduce carbon emissions on a wider scale."

Court appearance for mum arrested in police terror raid

A MOTHER arrested in Kent last month in connection with what is thought to be the first all-female alleged British-based terror plot has appeared in court.

Mina Dich, 43, of St George's Wharf in south-west London, the mother of Rizlaine Boular, 21, who was also charged in relation to the alleged planning of a suspected knife attack in Westminster, was arrested in Kent on the day of the raid in the capital.

The pair, along with associate Khawla Barghouthi, 20, are accused of conspiring together to murder "a person or persons unknown" between April 11 and April 28

All three were remanded in custody to appear at the Old Bailey on May 19.

Ultrafast broadband rollout for homes and businesses

HOMES and businesses in Margate are the next to benefit from an ultrafast broadband rollout.

Virgin Media announced last month up to 108,000 properties in Kent will be connected to its ultrafast network and claims the move in Thanet will transform the quality of broadband in a town where the average broadband speed is just 15Mbps, well below the Kent and national average.

Those interested will be connected to ultrafast broadband with entry level download speeds of 100Mbps, reaching up to 300Mbps for residents and 350Mbps for firms.

"Residents and businesses will be getting the high-speed connectivity they deserve," said director Neil Bartholomew.

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seven days

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Teens arrested in woodland murder probe

POLICE have arrested two teenagers as part of a murder investigation after a man was bludgeoned to death in Maidstone woodland last weekend.

Razvan Sirbu, 21, of no fixed address, was found dead on Sunday in the Loose Valley conservation area in Tovil at 7.15am.

Results from a post-mortem examination reveal that he died from blunt force trauma to the head and body.

During Thursday evening, detectives arrested an 18-year-old man near Aylesham and a 19-year-old man in a location within Maidstone. Both suspects remained in police custody as we went to press.

Anyone with information can call Kent Police on 01622 604100 quoting crime reference YY/011763/17.

Labour slams Tory plans as parents protest in row over children's centres

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

LABOUR is demanding children's centres in Medway remain open as the Conservative-controlled council this week launched a consultation into plans to impose closures.

Parents protested outside the local authority's offices this week, after the cabinet unveiled proposals to shake-up early help services by closing 19 Sure Start centres and creating four 'super hubs'.

Creation of the hubs, located in Gillingham and Twydall; Luton and Rainham; Strood, Peninsula and Rochester West; and Rochester East, Chatham and Walderslade was the council's recommended option over alternatives to close all centres and reinvest funding into other service priorities and organising centre staff in a single, centrally-based team.

If given the go ahead following public consultation, the 'super hub' centres would combine children's centre services for 0-5-year-olds, with early help teams who work with families and children who are aged five and upwards.

THREAT: Children's centres

The council says this means families would benefit from a whole host of services under one roof.

However, Vince Maple, Labour parliamentary candidate for Chatham and Aylesford, councillor for Chatham Central ward and leader of Medway Labour group said: "Sure Start is one of the greatest creations of the last Labour government – we have seen Medway Tory politicians repeatedly promise that the 19 centres are safe in their hands.

"It shows plain and simple you cannot trust our children's future to the Tories."

Conservative councillor Andrew Mackness said: "I'd urge everyone who has a view on this to submit their comments once the consultation is live and let us know their ideas about how we can deliver services in a different way.

"The service must transform if we are to continue to deliver quality early help to families and we need to think of innovative ways to do that.

"We cannot stand still and watch our services in their current model suffer due to reductions and changes in central government funding and a reducing council budget."

TRIBUTE: Ynez Button

£6,500 raised in honour of our Ynez

THE widower of one of Kent on Sunday's founding team has raised £6,500 in her memory after taking part in the Pilgrims Hospice Cycle Challenge 2017.

Ynez Button - known to many as Ynez Coton - died in February after a short battle with cancer. She was just 44.

She had helped launch this newspaper and spent years as its advertising director, becoming well known in the county through her long career championing the local media.

She married Mark Button in October but was diagnosed with her illness just two months later.

In her memory, Mr Button was part of a team taking part in the 50-mile event at the end of April. Ynez had been cared for at the hospice in her final weeks.

Friends and family contributed and, as a team, they raised just short of £6,500.

Speaking after the event, he said: "Ynez was my wife, my best friend and my everything and I miss her every day but I know that she would be immensely proud of what was achieved.

"I'd like to thank everyone who donated to this very worthwhile cause and everyone who has supported me through this incredibly difficult time."

There's still time to donate. Visit justgiving.com/marky-button.

Driver smashed into wall in police chase

A RAMSGATE driver smashed into a wall after running a red light, driving at double the speed limit and going the wrong way around roundabouts, a court was told.

John Buchanan, 21, of St John's Crescent, was arrested in the early hours of Sunday following the collision on Bairds Hill, Broadstairs.

He caught the attention of police by driving his Renault Clio at speed in King Street at 2.30am.

Buchanan failed to stop and raced away, reaching 70mph in a 30mph zone at some points, drove the wrong way around two roundabouts and shot a red light. Officers also seized two small packets of cocaine from the car.

Buchanan appeared before Medway magistrates the next day when he pleaded guilty to dangerous driving, failing to stop, driving without insurance or a licence, and possession of a class A drug.

He was bailed to appear at Canterbury Crown Court for sentencing on a date to be confirmed.

Death announced of popular councillor

TRIBUTES have been paid to Sevenoaks councillor Paddy Cooke who passed away at home on Monday.

The Conservative was district councillor for Penshurst, Fordcombe and Chiddingstone since 2007. He died following a long battle with cancer.

Peter Fleming, leader of the council, said: "Paddy had been fighting a very aggressive cancer for some time, but never made a big issue about it. From diagnosis through treatment he remained upbeat and stoic. Over the last year he set himself a number of targets; attending as many council meetings as possible, continuing to represent his community to the best of his ability and refusing to make a fuss about his cancer or his treatment, truly the measure of the man.

"I will miss someone who went about his work in a quiet, personable manner, but with steely determination when needed, a man always willing to give advice when asked for, and who was a genuinely decent human being."

His funeral takes place on May 25 at 1.30pm at St Mary the Virgin, Chiddingstone.

Squirrel duping folk into roofing scam

A ROGUE roof repairman who produced a dead squirrel to dupe a victim into having work done is being investigated by police.

A number of residents in Tunbridge Wells have reported the man turning up on their doorsteps and claiming he needs to be paid to get rid of an infestation of squirrels.

One homeowner told police they had a dead squirrel pulled on them by the man, who then demanded £300 to resolve the problem.

The resident then brought in an expert, reputable company, who told them there was no infestation or squirrel-related damage.

Sgt Andy Miller said: "This man targets people by cold calling and demanding cash up front.

"Work then carried out is either minimal, or nothing has been done at all."

So far, suspicious incidents have been reported in Sandhurst Road and Ferndale.

Anyone who believes they have been approached by a rogue trader should contact police on 101.

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Clark branded 'disgraceful' in energy row with guru Lewis

By Georgina Stubbs
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

GREG Clark's admission he has never switched energy provider to find a better deal has been branded "disgraceful" by a consumer expert.

Martin Lewis, the founder of MoneySavingExpert.com, whose Cheap Energy Club encourages engagement with the switching process, responded after the Conservative candidate for Tunbridge Wells said he had not switched because it is a "hassle", despite encouraging consumers to do so.

Mr Lewis wrote on Twitter: "Disgraceful. That should probably disqualify him from being energy minister. He should've tried just so he has lived the experience."

Mr Clark's comment comes after the Conservatives' announcement they will cap "rip off" gas and electricity prices if they return to power following the general election.

In March, Mr Clark said the government has worked with the industry to make it "quicker and easier" to switch supplier so consumers can find the best deal.

But when pressed by BBC Breakfast on Tuesday about when he had last changed suppliers, Mr Clark said: "I haven't switched, one of the reasons is... it is quite a hassle to do so.

DISPUTE: Greg Clark, who is to defend his Tunbridge Wells seat next month

"And in my view it shouldn't be necessary to have to switch, to have to go through the fuss, simply to avoid being ripped off.

"I think there should be a safeguard so that if you are loyal to your supplier, if you are someone that doesn't perhaps have access to the internet and is not able to haggle with your supplier, then you should pay a bit more than the best deals, but you shouldn't have the reality of paying through the nose for that."

Last year the Competition and Markets Authority said 70 per cent of people were on the more expensive "default" standard variable tariff, costing consumers £1.4bn more than a competitive market.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Energy and Climate Change also said in June that due to government action there are "more deals to choose from than ever before".

"We would encourage people who do not feel they are receiving a good deal to switch now," she said.

Former town mayor quizzed by police

A FORMER mayor was arrested this week as part of a police probe into an alleged assault.

Vic Openshaw, elected as a town councillor in 2011 with the Swanscombe and Greenhithe Residents Association, was town council mayor until 2013. Police spoke to Mr Openshaw, 64, and Mark Scamp, 37, on May 3, following reports of an altercation in Radzan Close, Dartford. Both were released the same day pending enquires.

Fish 'n' chip shop goes up in flames

FIRE crews had to tackle a blaze in the Sea View fish and chip shop in Beach Street, Deal on Tuesday.

The blaze started in a deep-fat fryer unit at around 10am which then spread to the first floor and ground floor flat roof of the property.

It was finally extinguised by around noon.

Author at the CCW

CELEBRATED author of Captain Corelli's Mandolin, Louis de Bernieres, officially opened a new resource centre at the Community College Whitstable this week.

He met students and staff before unveiling the facility - one of a number of major improvements introduced to the secondary school since it was taken over by the Swale Academies Trust.

TREND transformations

Kitchens and bathrooms of affordable luxury

Company with 120 year Italian designer heritage finding popularity in Maidstone

The TREND Transformations showroom in Nottcutts Garden Centre at Newnham Court Shopping Village offers the latest designs for all your home renovation needs. Rebranding from Granite Transformation is a move embracing the growth of the business from its inception in a small factory in Italy over 120 years ago. Its range of products and cutting-edge techniques for fabrication and fitting has expanded so far that, for several years now, they have offered complete kitchen and bathroom renovations as well as other projects in both residential and commercial spaces.

TREND Transformations has all the options for home makeovers from replacement kitchen work surfaces and doors, to complete new kitchens and bathrooms. Combining function and aesthetics, TREND Transformations specialises in projects which take away the stress of demolition from customers. The latest contemporary engineered stone products like the Trascenda range can be paired with beautiful hand-cut Orsoni mosaic tiles delivering a stylish and beautiful finish. The innovative methods of manufacture and design date back centuries and their tiles can be found in some of the most attractive landmarks in the world including St. Mark's Basilica cathedral in Venice, Westminster Abbey in London and the Golden Buddha in Sing Buri, Thailand.

Despite this impressive heritage, TREND Transformations' kitchens and bathrooms come at affordable prices.

One of the reasons TREND Transformations is chosen for home makeovers across the UK is their remarkable 'worktop that fits on top'. Unlike regular work surfaces, the material is lightweight and it can be installed over existing worktops, without removing the original or needing extra underpinnings. It can also be laid over bathroom tiles or fitted onto walls as a shower liner or decorative finish offering time-challenged and quality-conscious homeowners a premium surface design solution without the demolition hassle of traditional kitchen and bathroom remodelling.

Offering an exclusive selection of the highest-quality granite, recycled glass, quartz and mosaics, all TREND Transformations' products come with a lifetime limited warranty as they are stain and scratch resistant. TREND Transformations offers customers the opportunity to create contemporary, innovative and stylish living, but without the high-end price tag to match. And the best part is you can find everything under one roof. The full service is completed by their friendly team starting with a free design consultation, measuring, manufacturing and, finally, installation and after-care service.

Spring is the perfect time to tackle that bathroom renovation or refresh your kitchen worktops. Contact the TREND Transformations team to arrange your consultation or request a brochure for some design inspiration.

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www.trend-transformations.com/maidstone/
01622 469 541

One of our speed cameras is most profitable in country

KENT has one of the most profitable speed cameras on the country's roads with more than 3,700 motorists snapped exceeding the limit.

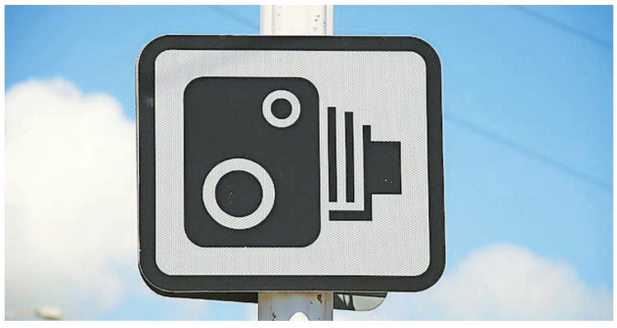
The figures released this week reveal a top five of the cameras which nab the most drivers breaking the law.

And in fourth place is the camera between junction five of the M25, at Sevenoaks, and the Clacket Lane Services.

It raked in £373,300 in penalty payments after catching 3,723 motorists were were averaging 61mph on the 50mph stretch of road.

The figure comes from new research from Carole Nash Insurance Consultants.

Top camera was on the A1 in Lincolnshire which pulled in £606,400, then the M180 in Scunthorpe (£583,500), next was the M25 between junctions 17 and 18 at Rickmansworth (£538,500), then the M25 between Sevenoaks and Clacket Lane services, and in fifth, the A12 Stratford St May in Suffolk.



Rebecca Donohue, head of marketing at Carole Nash, said: "It's really important to remember that such cameras are put in place to reduce accidents."

Arlington car park to be revived for Dreamland

A DEAL has finally been struck to renovate and operate a much-discussed car park near the Dreamland leisure complex in Margate.

The agreement between Dreamland and The Fresh Water Group will see Sands Heritage Limited, which operates the park, invest over the coming weeks to renovate the Arlington car park which, once open, will provide approximately 400 spaces.

The opening of the car park to the public is expected to have a positive impact on local people and businesses, as well as large volumes of tourists that visit the area in the summer.

Previously the site was earmarked for development by supermarket Tesco, much to the anger of the Arlington House Residents' Association, before it pulled out in 2014.

Steven Mitchell, CEO at Dreamland Margate, said: "As well as being adjacent to Dreamland, the new car park is close to many of the other fantastic things Margate has to offer, so it will be ideal for anyone visiting the town by car.

"The increasing number of visitors to the town in recent years is extremely positive for local people, but we are aware the limited public parking has been a problem, especially during the summer."

The Freshwater Group has a long-term leasehold interest in the Arlington estate and an investment fund of Arrowgrass Capital Partners LLP has agreed an option to acquire this leasehold interest in the estate.

Dramatic rescue at weir

EMERGENCY teams rescued a dog owner and his Staffordshire bull terrier after they got into trouble at the weir in St Radigunds Street in Canterbury last Sunday.

The duo were found struggling in fast-flowing water in the Great Stour river and were pulled to safety around 6.30pm.

'Migrants' found in lorry

A 54-year-old-man is in custody suspected of helping people illegally enter the UK after suspected migrants were found in a refrigerated lorry in Northfleet.A boy was taken to hospital and discharged before the group were taken to the Home Office immigration enforcement facility.

Gong for Titanic display

A TITANIC exhibition which drew 148,000 visitors to a Tunbridge Wells shopping centre last summer has helped it scoop a prestigious award.

Royal Victoria Place was a merit winner for its 'Titanic In Photographs' display at The Revo Purple Apple Awards.

City one of UK warmest

CANTERBURY ranks in the top five warmest cities in the country according to new data.

By using Met Office figures, Freeflush, which designs rainwater harvesting systems, found Canterbury was fifth nationally based on maximum average temperature, dry days and total rainfall.

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Manston meeting ahead?

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

AN AMERICAN logistics company which emerged last week as a potential investor in Manston airport says it will be meeting other parties aiming to get planes flying again on the site - and wants to secure a quick purchase of the land.

The firm, which has not yet been identified, has held talks with Thanet District Council chiefs over its proposals, and announced last Wednesday it was pursuing a compulsory purchase order (CPO) for the airport which closed in 2014, though now admits it is looking to buy the land directly.

However, the current site owners - bosses behind the Stone Hill Park (SHP) project - have repeatedly insisted they have no plans to sell up and warned last week the US firm's proposal to invest £100m in resuming aviation "will end up going nowhere".

SHP aims to deliver 2,500 homes and leisure facilities, while insisting the area's history and heritage will be respected and maintained.

Conservative candidate for Thanet North, Sir Roger Gale insisted the company should "make common cause" with RiverOak Strategic Partners, which is also aiming to re-open the airport.

DEBATE: Manston Airport's future is once again performing spins in the air

An RSP spokesperson told us last week they would be happy to meet and now the new investor also appears to have agreed to discussions, as the plans begin to gather pace.

"Following our meeting with TDC yesterday, and consulting with my clients, we will be speaking to all parties who have an interest in keeping this facility available for pure aviation use," said Dale Crawford of DTD Consult, which is representing the company.

"I have also been instructed to speak to the current owners and ascertain what their expectations are, so we can make a decision on a direct purchase instead of entering into a long drawn out process of the CPO application.

"My clients see the tangible benefits of having a fully operational logistics capability combining both the air and sea port, and have no interest in just fighting legal battles."

UK-based pension fund investor, Edi Truell, is also understood to be negotiating with the council over plans to re-open the airport.

Park set to be transformed

WORK began this week on creating an adventure park at Tunbridge Wells' Calverley Grounds.

The derelict bowling green in the picturesque town centre park is being transformed into an area full of play pieces and landscaped gardens designed to be a major attraction for families.

Some £225,000 was raised locally through a host of special events to fund the work will should be completed by September.

The park is being designed by preeminent landscape architect, Jennette Emery-Wallis.

Llamas hold up commuters

RAIL passengers were delayed between Hildenborough and Sevenoaks on Monday after a pack of llamas were spotted on the line.

The animals were on the track at around 8.30am and all services forced to slow. They were cleared from danger within the hour and none were reported injured by their trip on to the tracks.

They are believed to have escaped from a nearby field.

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Here today...but going tomorrow

Dover woke up last Sunday to find street artist Banksy had turned a wall on a derelict building into his latest canvas. But if you want to see it you may have to be quick as it now looks set to be sold off

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

THE latest piece by coveted street artist Banksy, which appeared in Dover last Sunday, is likely to be removed and sold, according to the owners.

The artwork, which depicts a workman on a ladder chipping away at one of the 12 stars on the European Union flag. appeared near the port town's ferry terminal on the side of the former Castle Amusements building, which is set to be demolished.

Property owners, the Godden family, which also owned the building upon which he daubed his previous Kent work - Art Buff in Folkestone - said they were looking at options with a London art gallery.

However, Tony Baxter, director at The Sincura Group, which specialises in the recovery, restoration, and sale of highly desirable artwork, told KoS the piece was ultimately "worthless", due to the difficulty in finding a buyer for work of that size.

"If the building owner came to us wanting it restored, I would say no," Mr Baxter said.

"We would not find a buyer for a piece that big, generally buyers want pieces they can hang on the wall and you would not be able to, removing it would be an absolute nightmare.

"Just to salvage it from the wall would take north of £200,000, it wouldn't be financially viable.

"It's a beautiful piece, but personally, I think it's worthless."

Despite his claims, the Goddens, which have a large property portfolio, insist they are exploring options for its retention, removal or sale, and will look to benefit local charities with any proceeds.

The Sincura Arts team has been involved in the removal and restoration of small sections of large Banksy pieces before, and Mr Baxter said the only feasible way of it being possible here would be just to remove the stencilled workman, though some of its value and interest would be lost without the wider context of the whole piece.

Mr Baxter also warned that local authority attempts to protect street art so accessible to the public has previously done more harm than good.

"Councils throw plastic sheets over the front but it causes more damage because there's biodegrading, a build-up of germs and paint sticks to the plastic - it kills the pieces," he said.

"By the time you get to look at it, it's a mess and there's nothing you can do."

When KoS went to see the piece earlier this week, the feeling among locals was generally one of positivity.

Driver Anthony Ford, 58, from Whitfield, said: "My first thought was 'how on earth did that appear without anyone finding out?' It's enormous.

"For Dover it's a marvellous thing because nothing much happens here, it's a little bit on the grotty side, if we're being honest.

"They ought to make that the Brexit logo.

"Traditionalists will think it's ruining the town but I reckon it's great, he should cover up some more of the eyesores."

Whitstable street artist Catman, who has produced work around the county himself, was also a fan.

"It looks like he's gone back to his old roots, like something he would have done 10 or 15 years ago," he said.

"I think he's more left-wing than right-wing, feels strongly about the EU and felt he had to produce something like this.

"The art versus vandalism debate is always a big question but he's done it very tastefully.

"I suspect he might not have done everything - someone else may have done the blue and the stars while he produced the workman.

"Between them they could probably produce a piece in 45 minutes.

"He usually turns up with those red and white workman's tents overnight but I don't know how he got away with it."

IMPRESSIVE: Banksy's take on Brexit made a big impression when it was spotted last weekend. It follows his work in Folkestone two years ago, pictured lower left, which was cut out of the wall and attempts made them to sell it. Although they were eventually thwarted. Dover pictures: ADY KERRY

Tram's £600m crossing scheme

Could we be going back to the past as a consortium looks to attract major funds to a project which would see trams following the route of the Lower Thames Crossing to further ease congestion pains?

By Emily King
Emily.King@archant.co.uk

FUTURE: Trams are enjoying a revival across Europe - but would they work here linking Kent with Essex?

AN ambitious scheme for a multi-million pound tram system to run alongside the new Lower Thames Crossing has been proposed - promising to cut congestion and link some of north Kent's most iconic development areas.

Running from north Kent to Essex, under the Thames, support appears to be gaining momentum - but bosses behind the scheme face a huge challenge to get the necessary funding.

Last month the government backed a £6billion crossing east of Gravesend - known as Option C - as its preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing, a route designed to ease the strain on the existing tunnel and bridge at Dartford.

Figures suggest it will drain some 14 per cent of the traffic currently using the Dartford Crossing.

But with more than 50 million people reportedly using the crossing per year, there is now a fresh push to use the Gravesend crossing as the catalyst for a number of improved public transport links.

The tram proposal claims it could reduce congestion by a further 10 per cent and would link such key high traffic areas as Bluewater, the developing Ebbsfleet Garden City and the proposed London Paramount Resort for the Swanscombe peninsula.

The man behind the project is financial accountant Gordon Pratt who was previously involved in the London and Southern Counties Railway Consortium, a private sector consortium established in 2016 pushing to deliver what is known as the Brighton Main Line Two - a second railway to run between London and Brighton.

He has established KenEx Thames Transit which has drawn up plans to see three lines serving the local area if the tram scheme gains backing. Each tram could carry 200 people.

Mr Pratt's proposal suggests that one line would go from Grays to Greenhithe - stationed at Bluewater, including multiple stops within Ebbsfleet Garden City.

Another would go from Grays to the proposed London Paramount resort at Swanscombe, and a final line linking the theme park to its car park.

Financially it is projected to cost £600 million, according to finance experts from KenEx Thames Transit - a tenth of the total price of the Lower Thames Crossing.

It is expecting the majority of costs to be met by private investors, but will also seek government money. The costs of using the service have not yet been estimated.

Mr Pratt said: "Obviously it's not as big as the Lower Thames Crossing, which is why it'll be cheaper. We don't have to provide for four lanes, or long approach roads, it will just be one tram line there and the same one back.

"Public transport options such as buses won't work because you'll get them through the tunnel then they'll have to turn around and there just isn't the room to do that in order to get them back. Trams go in, and then come back out.

"The case for this idea is quite simple; roads in the area are often gridlocked, levels of pollution are affecting the public's health, connectivity across the Thames is often disrupted in an area of high population density, classic rail connections are slow, and the area can become unattractive for homes and business investment.

"Because of my involvement with the London and Southern Counties Transport Consortium, which is a privately financed project, I know the money is available for investment in rail infrastructure, so I'm hoping I'll be able to firm it up soon."

James Willis, Liberal Democrat candidate for Gravesham is backing the scheme. He said: "Nothing is being done about public transport across the Thames. At present, there is a small ferry and a slow bus service that crosses, but that carries less than one per cent of crossing traffic.

"It would not only reduce congestion, but also local pollution and resultant deaths which are at an all-time high in the area, and higher than any other area in Kent. The coroner's office state that on average around 90 deaths per year in Dartford are due to pollution. The trams would be run with electricity, which could be paid for by fares to use the tram.

"This would also be faster, cheaper, and more frequent than rail services between Grays and Northfleet, which require people to go into London first."

A spokesperson for Green Party Kent, said: "The whole idea seems like a superb alternative. We would almost whole-heartedly support this as an alternative form of crossing to the Lower Thames Crossing. We know it's an idea to go alongside the new crossing due to be built, but that's only going to increase traffic and congestion. Whereas this idea would reduce the number of cars on the roads, and is something we would rather see than the Lower Thames Crossing.

"Trams are the past but they're also the future, and we believe that the government should pay for this crossing. One hesitation we would have is if it was built through private financers."

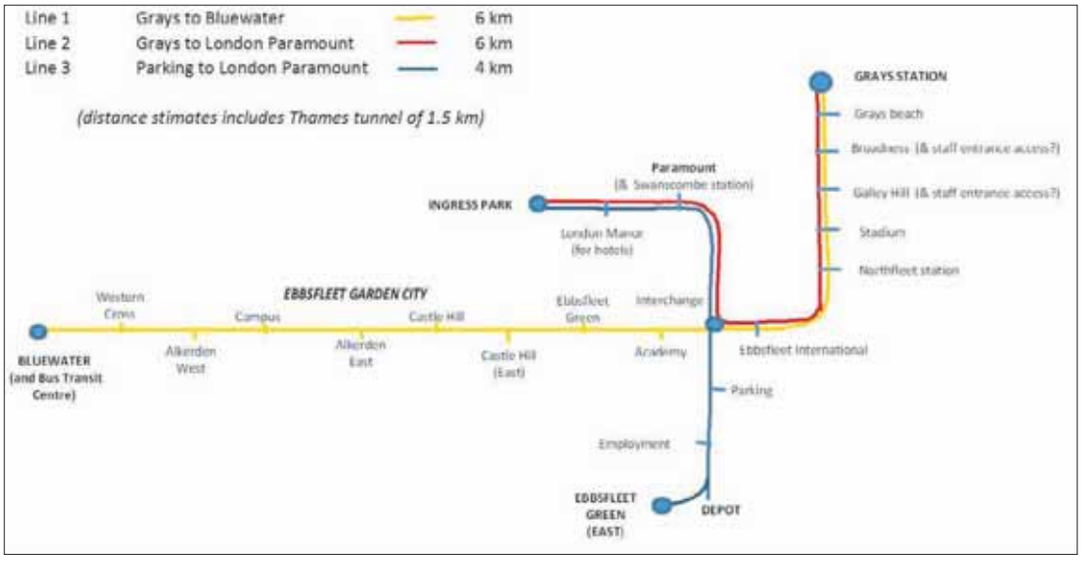
However, Bob Lane, chairman of the Lower Thames Crossing Association, still stinging from the decision to build Option C amid claims Highways England skewed the consultation to ensure it was the selected route, said: "I haven't got any thoughts on this proposal to be honest because I don't think Highways England or the government will listen to it anyway."

Highways England chief Jim O'Sullivan declined to comment on specifics of the proposal but said: "The Lower Thames crossing route will greatly improve journeys as well as unlocking more than £8bn of economic benefits and create some 6,000 jobs.

"The decision for a new crossing east of Gravesend and Tilbury is underpinned by years of studies, assessments and careful consideration of the record breaking response to our 2016 consultation. As we progress there will be further consultation and opportunities to be part of shaping the detail for the area, now and for future generations."

A spokesperson for London Paramount also declined to comment on the proposal.

Kent County Council failed to return our calls when asked about the project.



ROUTES: These are the three proposed services - but funding the ambitious project could be a stumbling block

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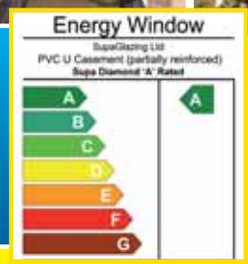

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Farage admits Ukip days may soon be over after wipeout

The former party leader said many will question its purpose if Theresa May delivers 'the kind of Brexit voters wanted' as the Greens again bang the drum for cooperation with Lib Dems and Labour in an effort to stop the Conservatives

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

NIGEL Farage has admitted Ukip may only last another two years if Theresa May delivers "the kind of Brexit that voters wanted".

Questions were again raised over the party's future post-Brexit as its representation on Kent County Council was completely wiped out last week.

After winning 17 seats in 2013 and becoming the main party of opposition to the Conservatives, Ukip failed to win a single seat at County Hall when the results were announced last Friday, only claiming one single victory nationwide.

And as the fallout rumbled into this week, Ukip Kent chair Richard Palmer announced his resignation from the party after criticism of its leader Paul Nuttall, with whom he shared a stage at a members' meeting in Margate just weeks ago.

Former MP Douglas Carswell, who defected from the party earlier this year, said Mr Farage was to blame for Ukip's collapse, having put voters off with "angry outbursts" over immigrants.

Writing in the Mail On Sunday, Mr Carswell highlighted Mark Reckless' victory in Rochester and Strood under a purple banner in 2014 as a highpoint for Ukip, but that the party had been set back by its former leader's outspoken comments ever since.

"Ukip alone offered the chance of change. But we blew it," he said.

"We won almost 60 per cent of the vote in Clacton by talking about GPs, not just immigration. In Rochester, we won by reaching out beyond our base.

"But rather than learn from that, Nigel Farage reverted to type.

"On the day we triumphed in Clacton, the then Ukip leader majored on migrants with HIV.

"Then he managed to end up in an argument about mothers breastfeeding in public, before making rude noises about Romanians.

"Why? Far from having a strategy, we seemed to be driven by whatever came out of Nigel's mouth."

Responding this week, Mr Farage, who has lived in Westerham, and only recently ruled himself out of standing again as a parliamentary candidate in South Thanet next month, admitted his party's future may be in the balance if the prime minister achieves a clean Brexit.

He said: "If, in two-and-a-half years' time, Mrs May has delivered the kind of Brexit that voters wanted, then I think you could ask the question 'what is Ukip's future, where does it go from here?'.

"It all looks and sounds fantastic but, as I say, we have got a career politician here whose record of delivery in the past has been very poor, so let's see."

He dismissed Mr Carswell as a "rather untrustworthy figure, which is why the Conservatives wouldn't have him back at the election".

However, Chris Wells, leader of the party's only council in the country in Thanet, said he didn't trust the prime minister to deliver by 2019 and insisted Ukip still had a role in putting pressure on the government, despite a disastrous election last week, in which he was beaten in the Cliftonville seat by both the Conservatives' Lesley Game and ex-Iraqi refugee Aram Rawf, who was standing for Labour.

"It's frustrating because I was out on the streets and there was no animosity or anger towards us as a party," Cllr Wells told KoS.

"I don't think it's understandable [that questions remain over Ukip's purpose] but people believe what others say about Ukip, so we need to make it clear what we need to do.

"Theresa May will foul up Brexit in the next two years because she never wanted to do it in the first place.

"She behaves as if she's Margaret Thatcher in a Rule Brittania costume when it was not her view - any rational person will tell you it's not going to happen and that's why Ukip is needed."

Mr Rawf, who won 300 votes more than Cllr Wells last week, said: "It was considered an unwinnable seat for the Labour Party, but I put my heart into the campaign and I'm proud to have knocked Ukip into third place.

"I feel I have helped wipe Ukip off the Kent County Council political map."

Cllr Wells previously held office as a Conservative county councillor but despite failing to win back a seat as a Ukip candidate last week, he insisted he had no regrets.

"There's frustration of course but I don't regret the decision [to move to Ukip], I've certainly had more fortune and fun in these last two years as leader of our council.

"I've now got two years to prove it can work again, that's the real test for me."

Conservative candidate for Thanet North

FUTURE: Nigel Farage admitted Ukip may be finished if the PM delivers on Brexit, but Thanet council leader Chris Wells insists the party still has a future, despite winning no seats on KCC. Green Stuart Jeffery, right, wants to team up with Labour and Lib Dems. Main pic: ADY KERRY

Sir Roger Gale last week accused Cllr Wells of making a last ditch attempt to win over voters as news broke of a fresh investor looking to get planes flying again at Manston airport - a hot topic among the district's electorate - just 24 hours before voters went to the polls.

Cllr Wells said in response he had no influence over the timing of the announcement.

Elsewhere in the fallout to last week's election, the Green Party is again calling for a county-wide alliance with Labour and the Liberal Democrats to challenge the Conservatives.

With the Tories winning 67 of the 81 seats available, the Greens clearly feel a pact between the three is the only way to stop more blue domination in next month's general election.

Labour parliamentary candidate for Chatham and Aylesford Vince Maple, who is the party's leader on Medway Council, has already ruled out such an alliance, insisting Labour intends to fight every seat ahead of the vote on June 8.

However, with Labour's representation on KCC decimated after losing eight seats, and the Lib Dems also failing to make any gains, the Greens, who successfully defended their one council seat in Hythe, want the parties to join forces over the coming weeks.

"With Labour and Lib Dems losing ground and the Tories polling at record levels we believe it is time to do politics differently which is why we have once again reached out across Kent," said Kent Greens co-chair, Stuart Jeffery.

"The aim is simple, work together to field a single 'progressive' candidate in each Kent seat who is endorsed by all three parties.

"The candidates' have two key promises, to fight for proportional representation and to stop an extreme Brexit.

"Sadly there have been no positive responses.

"As none of us are strong enough to win any of the seats in Kent on our own it is almost as if they want the status quo of traditional party divides to remain and ensure another five years of Conservative government.

"Not to even be prepared to discuss the possibility of such an agreement is short sighted in the least."

He added: "I hope voters will remember this."

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Who will you vote for in June 8 elections?

All candidates were confirmed this week in the race for Westminster.

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

MORE than 90 candidates were this week selected by their political parties to contest seats in Kent in next month's general election.

The Conservatives will be looking to defend control of all 17 constituencies on June 8 and are widely expected to do just that.

Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party will be competing with them across the county, however, while Ukip has fielded a total of 15 candidates.

There are also a handful of independents as well as candidates from minority parties such as the Christian Peoples Alliance, Women's Equality Party and The Official Monster Raving Loony Party.

Here is the full list of candidates in each Kent constituency.

ASHFORD
Sally Gathern (Labour)
Adrian Gee-Turner (Lib Dems)
Damian Green (Cons)
Gerald O'Brien (Ukip)
Mandy Rossi (Green)

CANTERBURY
Julian Brazier (Cons)
Rosie Duffield (Labour)
James Flanagan (Lib Dems)
Henry Stanton (Green)

CHATHAM AND AYLESFORD
Nicole Bushill (Ukip)
Tracey Crouch (Cons)
John Gibson (Christian)
Bernard Hyde (Green)
Vince Maple (Labour)
Thomas Quinton (Lib Dems)

DARTFORD
Ola Adewunmi (Independent)
Simon Beard (Lib Dems)
Andrew Blatchford (Green)
Ben Fryer (Ukip)
Gareth Johnson (Cons)
Bachchu Kaini (Labour)

DOVER
Stacey Blair (Labour)
Simon Dodd (Lib Dems)
Charlie Elphicke (Cons)
Beccy Sawbridge (Green)
Piers Wauchope (Ukip)

GRAVESHAM
Mandy Garford (Labour)
Adam Holloway (Cons)
Marna Gilligan (Green)
Emmanuel Feyisetan (Ukip)
Michael Rogan (Independent)
James Willis (Lib Dems)

FAVERSHAM AND MID KENT
Michael Desmond (Labour)
Alastair Gould (Green)
Mark McGiffin (Ukip)
David Naghi (Lib Dems)
Helen Whately (Cons)

FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE
Lynne Beaumont (Lib Dems)
Damian Collins (Cons)
Laura Davison (Labour)
David Plumstead (Independent)
Stephen Priestley (Ukip)
Naomi Slade (Independent)
Martin Whybrow (Green)

GILLINGHAM AND RAINHAM
Paul Chaplin (Lib Dems)
Rehman Chishti (Cons)
Martin Cook (Ukip)
Clive Gregory (Green)
Roger Peacock (Christian)
Andy Stamp (Labour)

MAIDSTONE AND THE WEALD
Emily Fermor (Lib Dems)
Helen Grant (Cons)
Stuart Jeffery (Green)
Yolande Kenward (Independent)
Allen Simpson (Labour)
Pamela Watts (Ukip)

ROCHESTER AND STROOD
David Allen (Ukip)
Steve Benson (Christian)
Primerose Chiguri (Independent)
Sonia Hyner (Green)
Teresa Murray (Labour)
Bart Ricketts (Lib Dems)
Kelly Tolhurst (Cons)

SEVENOAKS
Alan James Bullion (Lib Dems)
Christopher Robert Clark (Labour)
Graham Russell Cushway (Ukip)
Philip Dodd (Green)
Michael Fallon (Cons)

SITTINGBOURNE AND SHEPPEY
Mike Baldock (Independent)
Gordon Henderson (Cons)
Mark Lindop (Green)
Lee McCall (Independent)
Keith Nevols (Lib Dems)
Mike Rolfe (Labour)
Mad Mike Young (Monster)

SOUTH THANET
Raushan Ara (Labour)
Faith Fisher (Christian)
Tim Garbutt (Independent)
Craig Mackinlay (Cons)
Rev. Stuart Piper (Ukip)
Trevor Roper (Green)
Jordan Williams (Lib Dems)

THANET NORTH
Clive Egan (Ukip)
Roger Gale (Cons)
Martyn Pennington (Lib Dems)
Frances Rehal (Labour)
Ed Targett (Green)
Iris White (Christian)

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING
Colin Bullen (Ukip)
April Clark (Green)
Dylan Jones (Labour)
Keith Miller (Lib Dems)
Tom Tugendhat (Cons)

TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Trevor Bisdee (Green)
Greg Clark (Cons)
Chris Hoare (Ukip)
Rachel Sadler (Lib Dems)
Celine Thomas (Women's Equality Party)
Charles Woodgate (Labour)

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Macron win sparks Stack fears

Freight bosses warn of "catastrophic" impact on business and traffic across Kent if the newly-elected French president tears up existing agreement on cross-Channel border controls. **Tom Pyman** reports

THERESA May is being urged to hold crunch talks with the newly-elected French president over fears his plans to tear up a crucial treaty between the two countries would spark gridlock across Kent.

Freight bosses are calling on the prime minister to convince Emmanuel Macron not to renegotiate the agreement which permits British border officials to operate on French soil, known as the Le Touquet Treaty, as he suggested he could throughout his recent election campaign.

The Tunbridge Wells-based Freight Transport Association (FTA) warns the agreement is instrumental in preventing unnecessary congestion occurring at Britain's ports, and ensuring the continued movement of goods between the UK and continental Europe with as little delay as possible.

Mr Macron reportedly told Mrs May when they met at Downing Street in February he was willing to work to "improve" the deal signed in 2003, but greater assurance is needed over the coming weeks and months, according to the industry.

"The repatriation of border controls to the UK from France would have disastrous effects on the UK's logistics industry, as well as on general traffic through the Channel ports," said Pauline Bastidon, FTA's head of European policy.

"The Port of Dover has insufficient space to accommodate additional immigration checks – implementing such a change on UK soil would severely disrupt the cross-Channel flow of goods.

"At the current levels of activity, it would mean that supply chains are slowed down, with lengthy delays for both passenger and freight transport.

"This could, in turn, be catastrophic for just-in-time supply chains and cargoes of a time-sensitive nature, such as perishable goods.

"There is also the risk of giving the impression to people smugglers that the French border is now 'open', which could lead to a return of large numbers of migrants heading to the UK.

"This would increase the safety risks for drivers, who would once again see their vehicles targeted as they approached the Channel ports.

"Currently, checks are undertaken before trucks leave the continent, removing stowaways before the vehicles board ferries or enter the Channel Tunnel.

"Removing this possibility would also place operators in a difficult situation and make them even more liable for the heavy penalties imposed by UK Border Force when stowaways are found on board vehicles.

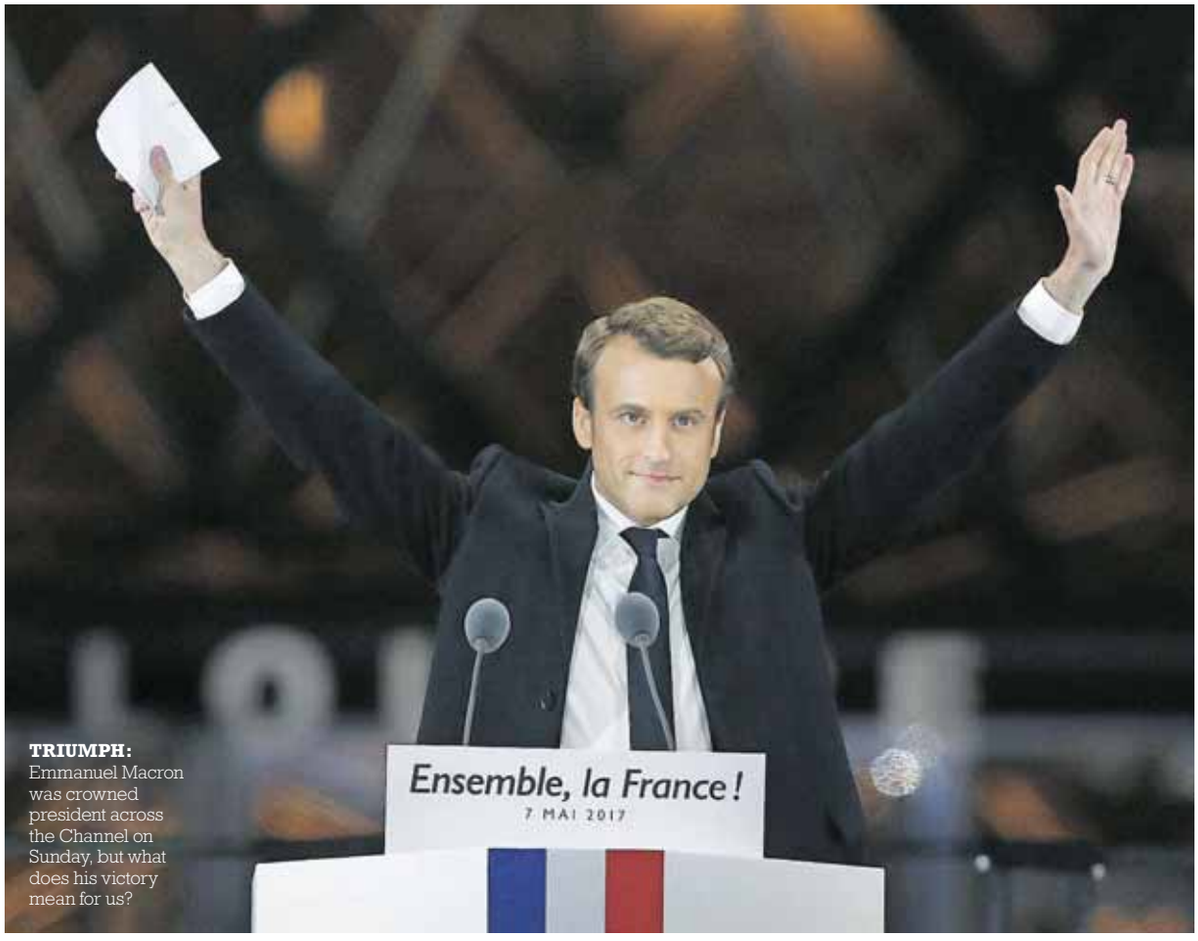
"Every year, around £119bn worth of trade passes through the maritime Calais-Dover route.

"Moving immigration controls would disrupt this valuable trade lifeline and cause significant delays on both sides of the Channel.

"We urge both governments to maintain the status quo, in order to protect cross-Channel trade which is of vital importance to both the UK and France."

The prime minister responded this week by saying a discussion over border controls between the two countries would be on the cards after the general election next month.

During an election campaign visit in north-west London, Mrs May said: "It works for the benefit of both the UK and France and obviously in the government that is elected after June 8, we will be sitting down and talking to Monsieur Macron and others about how that system has worked both to the benefit of France, as well as for the benefit of the UK."



TRIUMPH: Emmanuel Macron was crowned president across the Channel on Sunday, but what does his victory mean for us?

Speaking as MP for Dover and Deal earlier this year, Charlie Elphicke - who will be looking to defend his seat in June's election - has also warned colleagues in the House of Commons of the need for the constituency to be ready for formally leaving the European Union on day one.

He said the 14-hour queues seen in sweltering heat at the port last summer - caused by tightened security in France in light of recent terror attacks, as well as a lack of staff on the border - would look "a tea party compared with what will happen if we are not ready for Brexit".

Mrs May tried to provide reassurance back in March by saying: "The Home Office will be looking very closely at what measures need to be in place for Brexit for those coming across the border into Dover."

The government has attempted to allay fears of Operation Stack rearing its head as it did for large periods of 2015, by committing £250m to a huge lorry park "the size of Disneyland", proposed to be built just off the M20. Stack sees stretches of the M20 turned into a giant lorry park when there are problems at the ports which in turn forces regular motorway traffic on to A and B roads causing local frustrations.

Some campaigners, however, as well as the government's transport select committee, have raised objections with the plans and fundraising is ongoing in an attempt to launch a judicial review of the decision.

Le Touquet has been criticised in France for leaving the country to deal with huge numbers of migrants attempting to travel to Kent, and the prime minister's stance over the row was slammed by Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesman Tom Brake this week.

"Theresa May has adopted Ukip's rhetoric, and now she is adopting their incompetence too," he said.

"The Conservatives have repeatedly claimed that Brexit will have no impact on border agreements with France, but now the prime minister has admitted that they are up for negotiation.

"Changes to Le Touquet will mean an upheaval for people travelling across the Channel, risk making our country less secure, and are yet another consequence of the Conservative approach to Brexit.

"This is another clear reason why the British people must have the final say on the Brexit deal."

Mr Macron was victorious over the far-right leader Marine Le Pen on Sunday, though there have been fears his pro-Europe stance will hinder Mrs May in her Brexit negotiations.

MEP for the south east and former Folkestone and Hythe candidate for Ukip, Janice Atkinson, told KoS earlier this year Kent would be "a safer place" if Mme Le Pen was elected, due to her pledge to end the free movement of migrants through France.

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UTC starts to shine but is its breed under mortal threat?

We go inside an innovative school in Dartford to see why it's so different

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

THE ocean of education is rarely a calm one.

From the perils of whirlpools sucking away shrinking budgets, to staff suffering sea sickness due to the ever increasing workloads, or battling the relentless waves of demands from each successive government, the propsect of tranquility is perhaps as fantastical as Moby Dick.

Yet amid this white foam of activity, it can sometimes be easy to overlook some genuinely fascinating additions to the education mix.

The University Technical College (UTC) should, perhaps, be proclaimed as one of the more innovative crafts to set sail. The only problem is that it may have already sprung a link elsewhere in the country which could yet sink the best efforts right here in Kent.

Launched some seven years ago, the focus is on vocational education with a twist. Designed for 14 to 18 year olds, they offer a specialism in engineering, science, maths and technology - or STEM as they're collectively known.

The aim is to work closely with business to develop an environment where those with a more vocational bent can mould their talents in order to be perfect for the skills demanded of industry.

In concept, it is hard to argue with. Long has been the argument that pushing all students down an academic pathway is failing those for whom a more practical vocational education would be far more beneficial.

A thrust intensified by the continuing complaint from British industry that there is a 'chronic' skills shortage in the likes of engineering that must be addressed.

Certainly life has not been straight forward for the young UTC brigade (see box off) but one of is number in Kent packs an almighty punch.

Leigh UTC, part of the Leigh Academies Trust, sits as the end of a modern estate just a few minutes drive from the Dartford tunnel. On one side are major industrial complexes housing the likes of high-tech firm the SEM Group. On the other a housing estate.

CONFIDENT: Principal Steve Leahey is hopeful for the future

And there, straddling the two, is the shiny new UTC. A better metaphor you couldn't ask for.

The building itself is bright, modern and jam-packed with cutting edge equipment. Quite literally. Its workshops are full of high powered cutting, drilling and shaping gear which would not look out of place in SEM down the road. Which is handy as it is one a number of major businesses which have invested in the college.

Hours at the school emulate that of the working day, students dress as for work - so it's suits and ties - and the atmosphere is tangibly different. There is a more relaxed, grown up feel. Although that may, sadly, be in part at the least due to the fact its running only at a third of capacity. Try as you might to see past it, it is just a little, well, empty.

It has struggled to herald its unique selling point in a crowded education mix in a town which already has selective and non-selectives and the lure of further education colleges at 16 once the basic academic exams have run their course.

Perhaps its biggest stumbling block is the most basic one - that to start the UTC you do so at 14 - which means upping roots at that delicate stage for a teenager and starting afresh.

All of which is a crying shame in this case because the Leigh UTC has an Ofsted which described as good bordering on outstanding.

Steve Leahey is the experienced principal of the UTC. He explains: "We know more than any other school once a parent is through the doors and sees how impressive this place is, then the majority end up as bums on seat. Our problem is getting them through the door in the first place."

One solution to this issue has been the creation of the Inspiration Academy - currently under construction on a site immediately opposite. It has already proved a success with more than 300 applications for the 140 places. The first intake of Year 7s will arrive in September, and be housed in the UTC

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IMPRESSIVE: The Leigh UTC provides an interesting addition to the educational mix in Dartford and in the next academic year it will unveil the Inspiration Academy alongside it.

building until the new school building opens for business next February.

Every student enrolling will be guaranteed a place at the UTC - if they want it - if not then they can move to one of the other schools which sit under the trust's umbrella, which includes the likes of the Leigh, Wilmington and Longfield academies. And the curriculum will include all the regular subjects but with a focus on STEM.

Mr Leahey is aware of the challenge he faces to the UTC concept.

"But it's like a business – don't know many who open their doors and are hugely successful immediately – it takes time to develop."

Swing a left after going into the well-lit atrium of the building and you enter what appears to be a factory floor. There are countless high-end machinery. We meet a bright lad working on an electric car prototype. He's apparently impressed so much he's hoping to land a job with a Formula 1 team. Here local firms arrive and brief students on projects, working to deadlines and with clear targets.

Adds Mr Leahy: "Years ago, businesses would turn up at events and say schools just aren't producing the skill sets required and what are they doing about it?

"Our governing board is made up of business people. Chair of governors is a managing director, our vice chair is head of a company. They want my head always turned and tilted to what businesses are looking for."

For the sake of the Leigh UTC, the community should not only discover it but embrace it to ensure its long term prosperity.

'UTCS ARE UNDER REAL THREAT'

The UTC concept was created by Lord Dearing - the civil servant whose long career examining education would lead to the acceptance of university tuition fees - and Lord Baker, better known as many as Kenneth Baker from his days serving in the cabinet of Margaret Thatcher.

Launched in 2010, a flurry opened over the following years, including those in Dartford and Medway - both areas with a rich industry heritage.

But the path has been far from smooth - most significantly when it comes to attracting sufficient numbers.

Billy Camden is a reporter at weekly education industry newspaper Schools Week and followed the plight of UTC since their launch.

He explains: "There is a true threat to the UTCs model being abolished. There are clear problems; seven of them have closed or have announced closure, 60 per cent of UTCs visited by Ofsted have been given 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' ratings."

In a recent report by Schools Week, it revealed student numbers had fallen at 13 of the 20 UTCs which provided data. Eleven per cent were at less than half capacity.

Mr Camden adds: "It is very rare you would find a Year 9 who wants to switch school by choice at age 14. At this age the pupil is comfortable in a learning environment, they're following a curriculum that has become familiar to them, and they want to stay with their peer groups. It is a big step at the age of 14 to then move into a new situation and pick up a new ethos of an establishment.

"In addition, a lot of the technical expertise which could be delivered post-16 is already available through further education colleges so it raises the question of why do you want to bring in UTCs in the first place?

"It would be wise for government to pause the programme and completely re-evaluate how UTCs are run, and seriously consider dropping recruitment at 14."

So is the Leigh UTC's Inspiration Academy a sensible solution?

Adds Mr Camden: "It is a really interesting proposal and one that can be made possible because the UTC is in a multi-academy trust. Pupils have an easy option of moving to one of its mainstream academies if the technical route is not one they want to pursue at 14. It might not be so simple for a standalone UTC.

"Time will tell if this model is a successful one that other UTCs could follow."

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Parish records chart the evolution of Hildenborough over the decades

A local historian who spent months poring over council records has published a book which provides a fascinating glimpse back in time at the growth, development and community events of one village

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

IT is said every village has a tale to tell - and now Hildenborough is highlighting its own.

In a new book entitled Tales for a Kent Village, local historian and author Maurice Nairne has gone way back in time to chart the village's birth and development.

He spent months poring over parish council archives and records buried deep in the county council's vaults to deliver what he hopes is the definitive guide to a village perhaps most famous today for producing double Olympic gold medal winner Kelly Holmes.

The result is an astonishing labour of love weighing in at 206 pages and in excess of 60 pictures and illustrations.

It is entitled Tales from a Kent Village and is as seen through the extensive, often beautifully hand written notices, records and decisions.

The parish council gives an account of events in the village as recorded in the minutes books of the council dating back to its inauguration in 1894.

There is so much covered too, including its fire brigade, hall, green, recreation ground, charities, schools, allotments, roads, paths, public health, water, plus of course the wars, and even bad smells.

There are detailed accounts of celebrations to mark events like the diamond jubilee of 1897, the silver jubilee of 1935 and the coronations of 1902, 1911 and 1937.

Mr Nairne told us: "A few years ago a member of Hildenborough parish council who was helping out in the village library made a discovery. Languishing in the office was a large volume with the words 'minute book' on the cover.

"It covered the years from 1938 to 1952 and was apparently an unclaimed relic of a history exhibition held some years ago.

"It was a fascinating insight into Hildenborough's life during a period including the war years.

"It was decided to look at other minute books held in Maidstone.

SCENES: The book is packed with pictures from the archives which captures what life was like for those living there

"Detailed notes of the contents of these records were written up by hand and a copy presented to the recently formed Hildenborough History Society with another retained by the council. Some took the view that perhaps, soon to be forgotten and gathering dust in a cupboard somewhere, it might be worth publishing

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CHANGES: Just some of the village characters whose stories are told by the local historian

SALE: Copies of the book, below, are on sale now

the notes so that they became available to a wider audience. Thus, Hildenborough Parish Council has published the book with the support of the society."

It seems boy racers are nothing new. There were complaints in 1908 when the speed limit was raised from 14 to 20mph, and in 1910, locals moaned about "reckless" tradesmen and "careless cyclists". In 1923, a speed limit of 10mph for lorries was imposed and it was cut to 8mph for cars the following year.

In 1941, it was agreed the village children needed a bomb shelter and one was agreed for 159 students - Mr Nairne said the trouble was that there were 229 of them. One councillor said the Scout hut provided ample safety.

Another bizarre story from 1946 was the 50lbs of raisins and sultanas along with some tinned peas and pears which arrived from South Africa for locals suffering rations. A council committee selected the lucky ones to receive a share.

In 1952, a job shortage saw 80 applications to be caretaker of the Drill Hall, or perhaps it was the lure of the three bed cottage that went with it, plus £3 a week.

Mr Nairne said: "I was fascinated by the stories I found. Many were simple and many affected a lot of people locally.

"It was a slice of history I did not want to see disappear forever. It is these small things from a village history that help make that history live on.

"People come and go, but the history they create with their decisions and deeds never will.

"It took a lot of painstaking work to complete this book, reading some beautifully hand-written records that in themselves must have taken forever to complete.

"We have marked plenty of Royal celebrations too from Queen Victoria in 1897 and her diamond jubilee which saw 530 people be served by 40 waiters lamb roast, boiled beef, ham, veal, tarts, jellies, blancmange, tartlets, cheese, salad, beer, lemonade and ginger beer."

The plight of the village youth was also questioned in the '30s and '40s during discussions about the recreation ground use.

Many councillors were worried about children using it on Sundays and some said games should be banned during church services.

Mr Nairne said: "Some felt that games should not be played whilst others considered that they should be restricted during the hours of services. In 1947 the vicar, the Rev EWE Fraser, the council chairman, was reported as saying that whilst nothing should be done to make it more difficult for people to go to church, young people are better employed playing healthy games on Sunday, rather 'than lounging about on the street corners or sitting in stuffy cinemas watching questionable films'."

■ **Copies of the book can be obtained from: The Clerk, Hildenborough Parish Council, 60 Knowsley Way Hildenborough, Tonbridge, TN11 9LQ. Price £10 plus £1.60 if posted to an address outside the village.**

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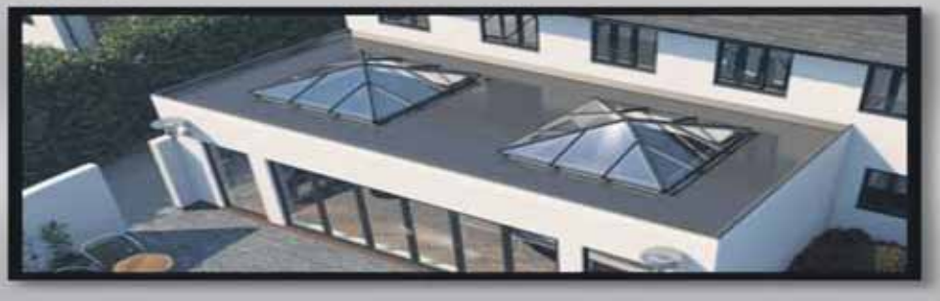

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BRIDAL *Diary*

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Say yes... to the high street dress

GONE are the days when buying a wedding dress means spending hours and hours in stuffy boutiques, a six-month wait for the gown to arrive and a minimum four-figure price tag.

More and more high street retailers are entering the bridalwear game, offering beautiful gowns in the sub-£500 (and even sub-£100) bracket. With most collections available online too, the dress of your dreams could be just a few clicks away.

Here's our pick of the high street bridalwear top five...

WHISTLES

Style: The retailer's inaugural wedding collection mixes modern shapes and ornate fabrics, with standout pieces including a flowing one shoulder lace gown and a tiered pleated column dress. Not set on a dress? Try the Seventies-esque ruffled jumpsuit.
Prices: £499 to £699
Best for: Tradition with a twist

ASOS

Style: Decidedly trend-led, the ASOS bridal collection is aimed at a younger clientele, with beachy, sexy dresses and a couple of Curve options too. There's even a white maxi T-shirt dress for the most laid-back of brides.
Prices: £95 to £350
Best for: Trend-setters

BOOHOO

Style: Boohoo's dresses are the most affordable of all, but they're surprisingly expensive-looking, thanks to an abundance of bead detailing and lace overlays. For brides who don't want to go floor-length, there are some very pretty midi and knee-length styles.
Prices: £30 to £50
Best for: Shoestring budgets

TOPSHOP

Style: The first ever Topshop Bride collection, which has just launched, comprises five limited-edition dresses in classic silhouettes but with fashion-forward touches, like thin satin ties and cold shoulder necklines. Interested? Act now, because some sizes are already selling out.
Prices: £350 to £795
Best for: Fashionistas

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Style: Miller brings her trademark cool-bohemian aesthetic to a range of bridal gowns at Debenhams. Think Twenties-esque tiers, beautiful beading and lots of lace.
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Best for: Boho brides

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AUTUMN WEDDING FAYRE – FREE ENTRY Sunday 5th November 2017 – 11am to 3pm

Guests' budget for the big day

MANY of us will attend a wedding this year - but you could find yourself saying, "I do" to a big bill.

The cost of the big day can soon add up. Guests can expect to pay nearly £500, while bridesmaids and ushers can find themselves spending more than £1,000, according to research amongst 2,000 people.

For many guests, the outgoings can start way before the big day itself, with the typical cost of attending a stag or a hen do coming to £58, according to a survey from American Express.

Choosing the perfect gift for the happy couple costs £102 on average.

A new outfit will come to £75, while topping it off with hair and beauty treatments costs another £28.

Guests typically spend £94 travelling to a wedding and £74 on a hotel, while a further £48 is spent on average toasting the bride and groom.

This brings the total cost for a wedding guest to £479 on average, according to the findings.

If you're lucky enough to be asked to be a bridesmaid, you can expect to spend £1,267, while an usher can expect to pay £1,127.

In a bid to fund the cost of attending a wedding, 44 per cent of guests plan to dip into their monthly salary, 26 per cent will use their savings, while a further 22 per cent expect to put their wedding costs on a credit card.

So if you're planning to attend a wedding this summer, how can you keep the costs down and enjoy the big day without worrying about how it will affect your bank balance?

Here are some tips from American Express:

- Personal touch. Video compilations or framed photo montages can be very meaningful.
- Plan ahead. When gift lists are sent to guests, ensure you're one of the earlier purchasers.
- Get renting. Consider hiring a dress or suit for the weekend. Plenty of companies now offer designer dresses and suits that can be rented at a fraction of the price.
- Use your tech. If you only need a ride from the station to the reception, consider using taxi apps instead of hiring a car. Don't forget to cut costs by car sharing with other wedding guests.
- If you do spend, do it wisely. Take advantage of vouchers and discounts.

Welcome to RDF Luxury Cars

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RDF Luxury Cars are a family business and have been in the hospitality industry for over 35 years in the Thanet area; we will take care of you from the start of your journey until the end, in comfort, style and luxury with little touches such as ribbons and drinks to make it all that much more special. If you would like to see the cars this can be arranged. All our drivers will ring ahead and be smartly dressed. Prices include ribbons, drinks & pick up from home to venue.

This luxury sports car really does have the wow factor with its silver body chrome lines, black soft top, this car is the one to be seen in.

Rolls Royce Phantom is one of the most desirable convertibles in the world. This fabulous car has a cream leather interior, with its beautiful metallic body work with a brush steel bonnet and contrasting blue soft top, this car is the ultimate in luxury.

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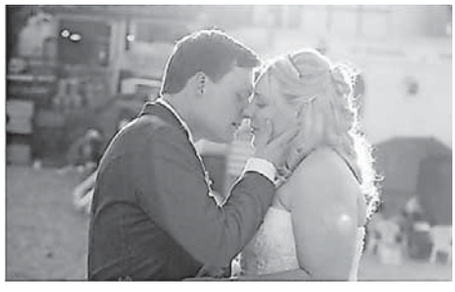

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Somerset Seaside 60s Party + Free Drinks

Pontins Sand Bay, Somerset Coast

16 June, 2017 • Quote: SA6-KOS

3 nights half board + Free Drinks
was ~~£159~~pp
Sale £139pp

Join us at Pontins Sand Bay resort, near Weston Super Mare in Somerset, for a Super Summer Party - for over 40s only - packed with entertainment. We've lined up a brilliant showbill with Union Gap, The Pacemakers, The Swinging Blue Jeans, Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations) PLUS The All Stars and guest compere Ray Martin. With non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to late Sunday and FREE DRINKS every night, this is going to be a fab weekend.

Save £40 per couple
Half Price Drinks
Over 40s only

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks per person per night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - club upgrade available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free parking

Top 60s Bands in Leicestershire

4* Hinckley Island Hotel

Friday 7 July, 2017 • Quote: HK7-KOS

2 nights half board
was ~~£159~~pp
Sale £139pp

Come with us on a trip down memory lane for some super 60s music hits and a friendly party atmosphere at this 4-star hotel in the heart of the Leicestershire countryside, near Nuneaton and Market Bosworth. Enjoy LIVE music from 60s bands The Fortunes and The Cufflinks. These party breaks are for over-40s only.

INCLUDED: 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV, tea/coffee tray and free wifi • 2 breakfasts & 2 dinners • Live entertainment both nights • Free parking

Sounds of the 60s Summer Seaside Party

Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast

Friday, 7 July, 2017 • Quote: PA7-KOS

3 nights half board PLUS £149pp

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for our exclusive, private summer 60s Party Weekend - for over 40s only. We've lined up a brilliant entertainment showbill featuring The Ivy League, Hermans Hermits, Vanity Fare, Steve Ellis's Love Affair, plus The Beached Boys. With non-stop fun from Friday evening to late on Sunday and HALF PRICE DRINKS, this is one party weekend you're sure to love.

Half Price Drinks
Over 40s only
Last few places

INCLUDED: Half Price bar drinks - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers - lunch times and evenings from Friday night to Sunday night • Entertainment • 3 nights en-suite chalet - club upgrade available • 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts • Free parking

Motown & Soul in Surrey

Thatcher's Hotel, Guildford

24 June • Quote: TG6-KOS

2 nights half board
was ~~£149~~pp
Sale £129pp

ENJOY a fun-packed party break at this charming Tudor-style hotel set in beautifully manicured gardens near Guildford, close to The Hogs Back Brewery, and Polesden Lacey, a National Trust Edwardian country house and estate. The weekend entertainment programme features Motown & Soul music with Gee Bello & Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations).

Save £40 per couple
Over 40s only

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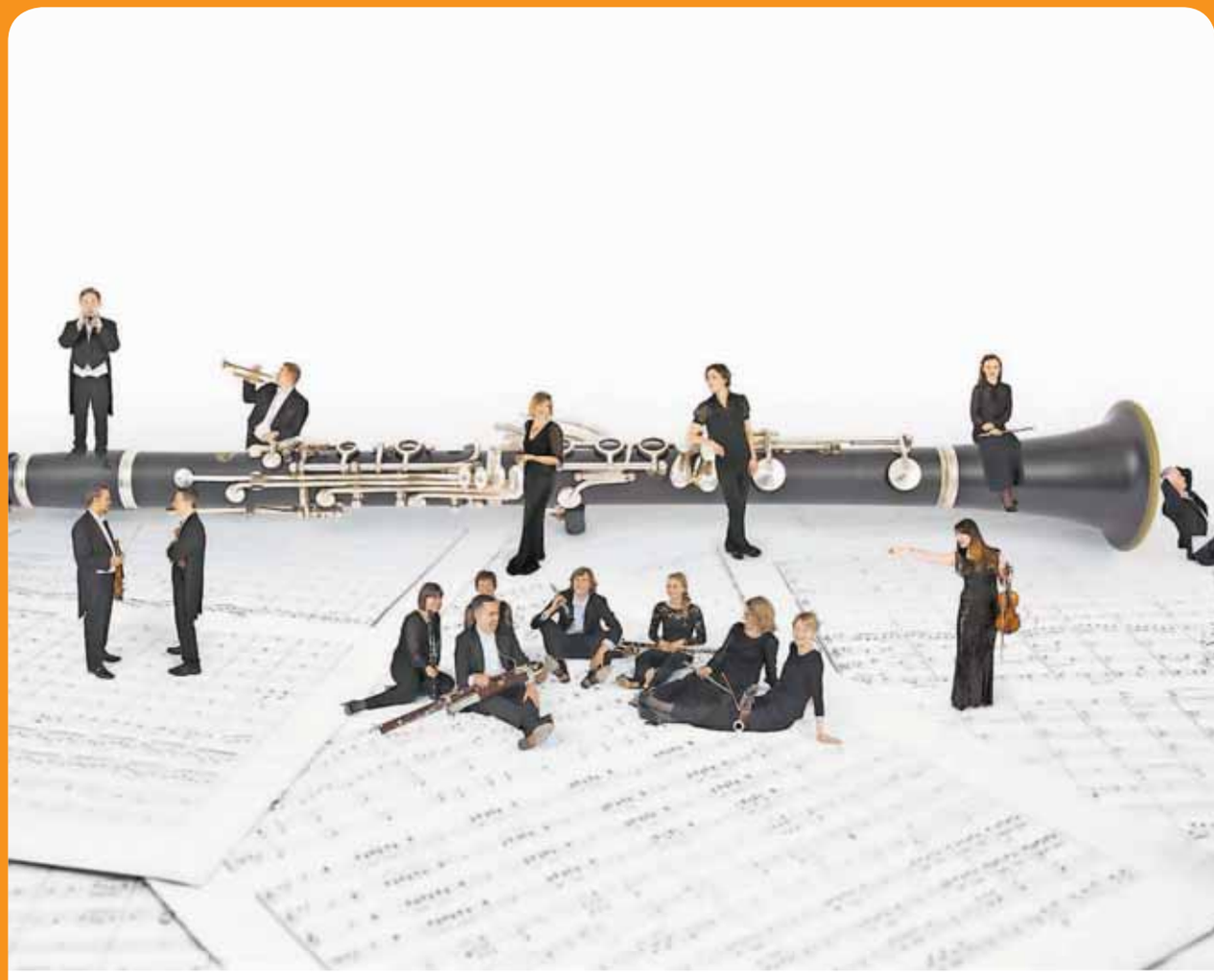

PERFORMER: Clarinet principal of the RPO, Katherine Lacy says she has followed in one of her parents' favourite performers

Clarinet star all set to dazzle with the magic of Mozart

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra is performing in the county in theatre show

THE majesty of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra will sweep into Dartford next month to perform Edward Elgar's Enigma Variations.

The orchestra will also be performing works by the likes of Mendelssohn, Sibelius and Mozart, led by conductor Jamie Phillips.

RPO principal clarinet, Katherine Lacy, will be performing the centre-piece of the show, Mozart's Clarinet Concerto.

She explains: "In my opinion the piece is one of the best ever written, if not the best piece for any woodwind instrument ever written. From an audience point of view it's simply full of great tunes and takes you through so many different characters and emotions, all in less than half an hour.

"From a clarinettist's perspective, it's absolutely staggering what Mozart achieved with this piece, compared to anything that had previously been written for the instrument - it spans nearly four octaves, it is incredibly virtuosic and contains the most beautifully expressive phrases you could ever hope to play."

The performance at the Orchard Theatre will start with Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture, which conjures the sights and sounds of Scottish scenery, from calm still waters to intense and dramatic storms. Moving from the Highlands to Nordic plains, Sibelius' symphonic poem Finlandia opens with snarling brass and thunderous timpani, building to its stirring climax brimming with drama.

Then Katherine Lacy will get to grips with Mozart before Elgar's ever popular and quintessentially English 'Enigma' Variations provides a finale to the performance.

Not only an enjoyable evening, it is hoped it may appeal to some who would not normally attend a classical performance.

For the clarinettist, her love of music came from birth.

She explains: "My parents were involved in entertainment themselves and there were always classical music records on at home when I was growing up. One of my dad's favourites was Jack Brymer playing the Mozart Clarinet Concerto and I'm sure that it must have been that that drew me to the sound of the clarinet.

"I joined the recorder group in primary school and the next logical step seemed to be to take up another woodwind instrument; I was quite determined that the clarinet was the instrument for me. To think that I'm now in some way following in Jack Brymer's footsteps [he was the RPO's principal clarinet 1947–1963] is amazing."

And her advice for any budding musician? "You just never know what opportunities might come your way and you need to be ready for them," she says. "You will be constantly told how hard it is to succeed as a musician and it is true that competition is fierce and even if you make it, it's certainly not an easy life, but I would say that if you really want it and are prepared to work your socks off, go for it. You won't know unless you try."

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra perform at Dartford's Orchard Theatre on June 11.

• Tickets are available now from orchardtheatre.co.uk.

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Women Seeking

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ATTRACTIVE Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425323**

KATIE 35YRS, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673**

CAROLINE, attractive mature lady, various interests, hoping to meet a smart gent for socialising, perhaps leading to something more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426347**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715**

JOY happily married, bi curious, blonde hair, blue eyes, big boobs, seeks someone to join in a bit of bedroom fun! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426845**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399**

ANNE blonde hair, blue eyes, seeks males for no strings adult fun! Call and leave a number for me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426843**

JASMINE, 34yrs, non smoking first time dater! Easy going, attractive and hard working. Due to work commitments I'm looking for a no strings companion any age. Looks unimportant must have GSOH. **Tel: 0906 515 3014 Box 426201**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375**

MATURE lady 70s, various interests but a bit lonely, hoping to meet a gent to cheer me up, come on, we can have some fun together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426349**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. PIs call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 422365**

GENTS, please call me if you are looking to meet a kind sincere lady for nights at the theatre, socialising etc. You can call or text me. I promise to reply, I'm very genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426345**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3034 Box 425979**

JACKIE is 54yrs and an attractive easygoing brunette, she's hoping to meet a similar minded chap for some fun, dates, chats, text or call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426343**

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box 426205**

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ATTRACTIVE blonde lady, 54yrs, loyal, romantic and solvent hoping to meet a gent with GSOH for romance, sensual times and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426341**

KAREN, 52yrs, attractive with GSOH, very active and outgoing. If you are 40+ give me a call, lets have a chat, maybe meet up. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426339**

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. **Tel: 0906 515 3042 Box 426851**

LADY, 70, 5ft6, divorced, blonde hair, brown eyes, friendly, lives in the Kent area, likes walking, holidays, WLTM somebody for friendship in the local area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426193**

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PIA, Asian lady, 57yrs, very caring and a little subservient and quiet. I am a good cook and loyal friend. PIs text me if you are kind man 55+ **Text Only. Mailbox 4013378**

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425327**

NATALIA, black beauty! I am late 50s but still fit with a good figure and lovely skin and eyes. I would like to meet a nice white gentleman, older than myself for chats, maybe more. **Text Only. Mailbox 4107799**

ANETTA, black cuddly lady seeks man who knows what a woman needs. I'm very friendly and have time for you. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425933**

JANE, attractive and young looking 60 something lady, active, outgoing with interesting personality, hoping to meet a kind gent for occasional meetings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425931**

GILLY, slim petite lady, affectionate and loving, solvent with own home, hoping to meet gent, must be kind, looks unimportant. ACA/text answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425929**

MERRY widow seeks lovely lonely gent for companionship. Please call, we can have a chat and see how we get on. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425927**

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425341**

LIVELY 53-year-old female, young in mind, wants discreet fun, loves gardening, dancing music etc and more. **Text only. Mailbox: 5763284**

JACKIE, 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424491**

SUE, 60s lady, calling all gents who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424781**

HELEN, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493**

SUE, genuine lady, own home, loves to spoil a man, give me a call or text. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424673**

Men Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received. mydate24

LOCAL 70 year old young male, now single, nice appearance and dresser, looking for fun and friendship with a lady, 55-70, possible holidays. Can travel. Please ring. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426897**

CARING, sociable male, 72, N/S, likes all types of music, walking, meals out, looking for a lady for friendship at first. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426865**

KENT man, retired engineer, solvent, enjoys holidays, meals out, good conversation, WLTM a slim lady, 60-70, with a GSOH, to share these times and hopefully become friends. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426887**

RETIRED, smart, 68 year old, 5ft5, I enjoy eating out, walking, holidays and golf, WLTM a slim, attractive lady, 60-68, for a loving, tender relationship, to enjoy these times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421853**

MALE divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717**

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015**

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641**

BARRY, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

JERRY, 66, brown hair, brown eyes, recently widowed, love to walk my dog, WLTM compatible lady for companionship and to see where things go. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426387**

LOCAL man, seeks lady for friendship possibly more, for romantic dates and good times together, hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426195**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

MALE, 55, looking for no strings attached friendship, with a lady 60-70, any status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426133**

MALE, 6ft, brown hair and blue eyes, warm and understanding, likes dining out and cosy nights in, lots of fun, friendship and holidays. Looking for a lady over 48. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426057**

EASYGOING male, 49, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 401401**

DENTAL practitioner, 44, 6ft, slim, athletic build, thick dark hair, blue eyes, loves sports, seeks slim feminine sporty lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425087**

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTM interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424675**

WANTED gent 50-76 for cosy nights in, good times, call or text me, you won't be sorry. I'm attractive and have lots to offer. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425339**

LOVING lady, romantic and tactile seeks like-minded gent for special times, lets make each other feel special. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425325**

SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady, young looking 60s, genuine and kind, seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424671**

MARY, professional mature lady, loves life, very sociable and fun, seeks gent for good conversation and happy times. All calls and texts answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424775**

CARING sociable, GS0H, slim, attractive, married gent, 67, feels discarded and lonely, seeks likewise lady 60+ for trips out, dining etc. **Text only. Mailbox: 5082918**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, 64, widowed, own house, loves holidays abroad, reading, eating out, eating in and shows, WLTM a lady of similar age to share interests and happy times together hopefully leading to lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425787**

MALE, 70s, would like to meet slim lady 60 plus. **Text only. Mailbox: 4505135**

HELLO, mature gentleman looking for a lady who is caring, likes holidays, karaoke, meals out, country walks and cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425401**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425345**

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425343**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425333**

PIERS, 56yrs, romantic gent WLTM lady to wine, dine, spoil. I'm kind, caring, generous pls call me. Single mums welcome. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425331**

GENUINE gentleman, family minded, kind, generous seeks lady 55-75 for wining, dining and wine and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425329**

NICE looking 55 year old male WLTM sincere lady, any age, for friendship, outings, holidays abroad etc. Love the sun. **Text only. Mailbox: 4922399**

EDWARD, 77, looking for a companion South East area of Kent, for holidays, days out, social events, and lots more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423039**

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, wishes to meet attractive female, into music, live bands, cinema and some sports, for nights out socialising and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424979**

HI I'm Darren, down to earth guy, lives in Kent, likes Marbaia, looking for someone special to meet and have a laugh with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424951**

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421**

NICK, mature male, builder, tattoos, plenty of money, looking for discreet meets, no stings in the Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424787**

RETIRED, intelligent, Broadstairs widower, GSOH, medium height and build, seeks slim lady for friendship and companionship initially. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424697**

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59YR old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685**

MALE 50 seeks mature, home loving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683**

MARTIN trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424681**

MALE, 52, quiet nature, likes coastal walks, cinema, reading, WLTM lady for friendship and maybe romance. East Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424211**

MARK 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424679**

CARING 55yr old male, widower, 6ft 3ins, WLTM lady, 40-55 for fun and laughter, maybe happy ever after. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424677**

Gay Seeking

Join our Gay online service ***FREE*** visit: ***localgaydate.co.uk***

GAY guy, medium build, likes outdoors, DIY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267**

EASY going guy, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413**

ROB, bi-curious male, 55, seeks likeminded male, crossdresser/TV. Must be discreet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426287**

MALE, 40s, seeking gym buddy to attend DW gym in the early evenings, similar age. Margate. **Text only. Mailbox: 5779191**

Friends

FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No:4748240**

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Historic town gardens on show in day of green-fingered delight

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

OPEN: Just one of the gardens that will be open for visitors on June 25

GREAT British Bake Off runner-up Jane Beedle will officially open the Faversham Open Gardens and Garden Market Day next month.

The garden designer, who came second to winner Candice Brown in the show's final outing on the BBC last year, will also be visiting various venues throughout the day as the event's 'roving expert'.

Some 35 gardens, most within walking distance of one another, will be opened up to visitors while Market Place will boast more than 30 garden-related market stalls on June 25 from 10am to 5pm. It is now the biggest open gardens event in the south east.

Gardens include walled gardens, wildlife-friendly town gardens, an 'exotic garden', a 'meadow' garden and tiny gardens bursting with plants. Several gardens are on Faversham's waterways. Four gardens behind Cyprus Road cross the Cooksditch, an ancient stream, and 'England's prettiest allotments' overlook the beautiful Stonebridge Pond. Stonebridge Lodge on the edge of Stonebridge Pond is another garden created around waterways.

There are also several community gardens, including the wildlife-friendly and pioneering Abbey Physic Garden, which helps people suffering from physical or mental difficulties.

The Garden Market has several specialist plants stalls as well as vintage and second-hand garden tools and artefacts, local craft and hand-made foods. The market is open from 10am - 4pm.

A spokesman said: "The day has been designed to offer an enjoyable day out for families and groups of friends – there are plenty of cafes, pubs and restaurants within easy walking distance and some gardens offer home-made teas. There is also a children's Hunt the Golden Pebble competition."

Run by the Faversham Society, tickets are priced at £6 each or £10 for two.

Money raised will go towards the society's on-going campaign to protect the town's historic buildings and environment.

Tickets will be available this month from the Fleur-de-lis Heritage Centre in Preston Street or on the day at the organisers stall in the Market Place.

Stars all set to Rip It Up

STRICTLY Come Dancing trio Natalie Lowe, Louis Smith and Jay McGuiness will perform in Rip It Up at Chatham's Central Theatre and the Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge in October. Tickets on sale now.

Park springs into art fayre

CENTRAL Park will play host to the Dartford Spring Arts Fayre next Saturday, May 20.

It will feature modern and traditional events such as a street art, nature sculpting, street food stalls, craft beers, dance acts, and art competitions. For details and line-up see dartfordartsnetwork.com.

Bill's 2018 show on sale

TICKETS for Bill Bailey's show at Margate's Winter Gardens went on sale Friday.

The star will be performing his Larks in Transit show at the venue on April 21 next year.

Tickets cost £27.50.

Dirty Rotten musical

THE Kentish Players will be doing their take on Dirty Rotten Scoundrels - The Musical, at Chatham's Central Theatre next month.

Based on the hit film with Steve Martin and Michael Caine, the show runs from June 14-17.

It will be the first amateur production of the show in Medway.

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Calman's double header

COMEDIAN Susan Calman will perform at Margate's Theatre Royal on June 23 and an already sold out date at the Trinity Theatre in Tunbridge Wells on June 3

Tickets are on sale now.

Deal date ahead of festival

RISING stars Edd Hedges and Alice Marshall will preview their Edinburgh Festival shows at next month's comedy night at Deal's Astor Theatre, it has been confirmed.

Tickets for the show, on June 8, are on sale now and cost £10 each or £20 to include a curry and a drink.

It's Strictly Shirley Ballas

LATIN dance champion Shirley Ballas has been confirmed as the new head judge on Strictly Come Dancing - replacing Dartford's Len Goodman.

The hugely popular BBC show returns in the autumn.

RAF band joins the line-up

THE Central Band of the Royal Air Force will join the line-up for this year's Leeds Castle Classical Concert on July 8.

The band will be conducted by wing commander Piers Morrell who is soon to be promoted to principal director of music.

Organisers said they were "delighted".

Dreamland back with a bang for its big return

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

DREAMLAND has unveiled details of its grand reopening this year as it looks to capitalise on a £25million investment and prove it can be a profitable and vibrant addition to the county's tourism arsenal.

The Margate theme park will open its doors again on Friday May 26 and is promising a busy bank holiday weekend featuring live performances and the first chance to experience its enhanced offering of vintage rides.

There are also modern art installations and a host of food stalls from around the world to entice people in.

Entrance to the park remains free with a ride-as-you-go approach or unlimited ride wristbands available to buy online.

Among the performances will be LA band Vintage Trouble - who recently supported the Rolling Stones and The Who - kicking off the new outdoor Scenic Stage with their brand of rhythm and blues on the Friday night.

The park will then be open for business throughout the May half-term holiday.

Steven Mitchell, CEO at Dreamland, said: "Our opening weekend celebrations are a sign of things to come at Dreamland. We have curated a new age of seaside culture and are presenting something truly unique in Britain today, all while embracing our rich history. We're incredibly excited to relaunch the park and are sure it will have a lasting effect on local people and businesses. There's a great future ahead."

Certainly it needs to dazzle this summer after a stop-start return to life. The company behind the park went into adminstration at the end of last year after racking up millions in debts and it was dogged by the closure of main feature ride - the Scenic Railway rollercoaster.

Now, however, with heavy investment - which is seen as a way to make the business attractive enough to find a new buyer - the park is looking back to its best.

• For details see dreamland.co.uk.

STARS: Vintage Trouble will perform on the opening night

SIGN: Will this finally be the recipe for success?

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Changing climate's threat to our green gardens

Brace yourself to bid farewell to our lush lawns and usher in a new dawn due to the changing weather

BRITISH gardens could end up devoid of luscious lawns, with popular plants proving more difficult to grow and plant pests and diseases spreading, according to a new report from the RHS and leading academics into the impact of climate change on gardening.

Plants will have to cope with increasingly warmer and drier weather in summer, but also more turbulent spells with intense, sometimes unpredictable heavy showers and strong winds.

The news is not all bad, though. Gardeners in the north could enjoy a longer growing season, experts say.

The wide-ranging report, Gardening in a Changing Climate, looks at both the impact the increase in global temperatures is currently having on plants and gardeners, and the future of gardening as temperatures increase.

The report is a collaboration between the RHS and academics from the universities of Sheffield, Reading and Coventry, with input from experts from the Met office.

It's the first in-depth analysis of the effects of climate change on UK gardening in more than a decade - the RHS last investigated the issue in 2002 with the National Trust and UKCIP (Climate Impacts Programme) to produce the Gardening in the Global Greenhouse report.

While the 2002 report concluded that gardeners would be basking in Mediterranean temperatures and so could grow more plants that thrive in bright, dry conditions, model projections suggest warmer but more variable climatic conditions.

DRY: Our gardens are to get more and more dry in the years ahead

The updated report has found that gardeners can expect more extreme weather, characterised by more variable, intense rainfall, combined with an increase in dry summers, which will be most pronounced in the south of the UK.

Gardeners looking to cope with the challenge of increased rainfall may have to adopt new practices to ensure the survival of some of our favourite plants.

Traditional plants, such as tulips, alliums and asters may have to be planted in raised beds to survive increased rainfall. The extra height will lift their roots clear of the water table.

Those experiencing higher temperatures may turn to heat loving plants, such as aloe or lavender.

Lush, green lawns are likely to be a major casualty and may have to be converted to dry meadows, as pressure on water supplies increases.

In a foreword to the report, Professor Dame Julia Slingo, the former Met Office chief scientist says: "This report provides some valuable guidance and demonstrates how climate change need not be a disaster for our gardens, but instead provide us with a wealth of opportunities."

Based on the report, the RHS Garden for a Changing Climate will be unveiled at the inaugural RHS Chatsworth Flower Show in June.

Think about festival

THE third annual Normal? Festival of the Brain takes place at Folkestone Quarterhouse from May 25-28.

The event includes music, performance, comedy, food, talks, dancing, books and film bringing together science and art over four days.

It is produced by the Quarterhouse, Folkestone Fringe and Living Words. See quarterhouse.co.uk for details.

Family fun at carnival

THE county's large village carnival is ramping up for its 2017 event.

The Aylesham Carnival and Fete takes place on September 23 and features a host of family fun which includes a mini fun fair for children and arena displays, as well as the traditional village fete.

It runs from noon until 5pm when the parade moves off. For details see aylesham-carnival.co.uk.

Hobbit star's evening

TV and film actor Graham McTavish, best know for his work in The Hobbit trilogy, Creed, Rambo and series Outlander and preacher will be star of 'An Evening With...' at Canterbury's Conquest House on July 9.

Presented by new Canterbury-based Bad Husky Productions, tickets for the event cost £30 and are on sale now. The show starts at 7.30pm.

Sacconi's church event

THE Sacconi String Quartet will present its annual three-day set of classical chamber music concerts at Folkestone's St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church next weekend.

The event runs from May 19-21 and this year marks its 10th anniversary.

A full list of the performances and how to get tickets can be found at the festival's website - sacconi.com/festival/.

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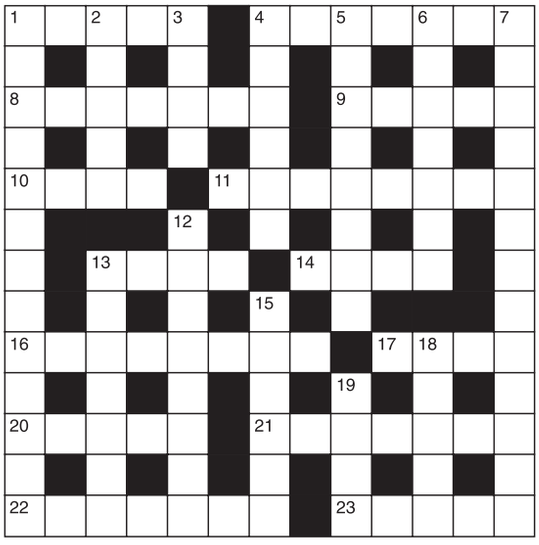
PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across
1. Divided (5)
4. Recipe (7)
8. Inclusive (7)
9. Test (5)
10. Whirlpool (4)
11. Fidelity (8)
13. Platform (4)
14. Idle (4)
16. Emerge again (8)
17. Cease (4)
20. Watchful (5)
21. Bravery (7)
22. Axe (7)
23. Heading (5)

Down
1. Exemplary (5,8)
2. Alter (5)
3. Rip (4)
4. Hesitate (6)
5. Intelligent (8)
6. Resort to (7)
7. Intact (3,2,3,5)
12. Send (8)
13. Local speech (7)
15. Talisman (6)
18. Pamphlet (5)
19. Injured (4)

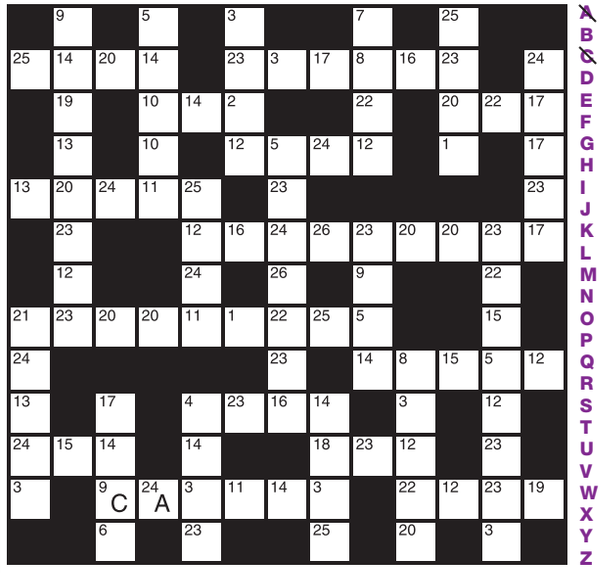
Cryptic

Across
1. On which to write letters about the chaplain (5)
4. Disappear right inside a coat (7)
8. In my view, a vegetable with a very good stuffing (7)
9. Best substitute for shaving soap (5)
10. The song told a story (4)
11. Keep for a lock (8)
13. It's bound to secure advance accommodation (4)
14. A standard laid down to help pave the way (4)
16. Snuggled into a new quilt, managed to remain undisturbed (8)
17. Its purpose in sport is to eliminate passion (4)
20. Number hide from rebuke (5)
21. An order to stop amber changing to green? (7)
22. Open boat in spill (7)
23. Shrub belonging to you in the past, then me (5)

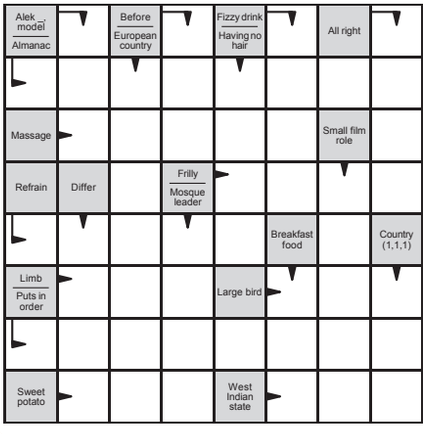
Down
1. New Liberal M.P. to put up a bill inside? Doubtful (13)
2. Energy displayed in court? (5)
3. Prepare to put out with the turn of the tide (4)
4. Five finish with an alternative seller (6)
5. Articles about concerts (8)
6. In the main a submarine hazard? (7)
7. It's said to be the best place to be (4,5,4)
12. A number on a search get a victory (8)
13. Carriage axle-bush for instance (7)
15. Passenger ship has a slender look (6)
18. Not late, but nearly lost a point (5)
19. Come up against an objection (4)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



Arrowword

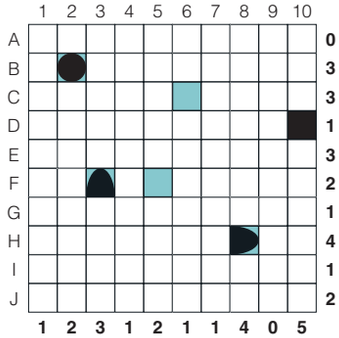


Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

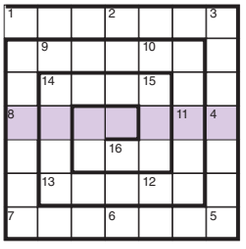
Battleships

Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET
1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Lost blood
2. Not light
3. Potter's oven
4. Amphibian
5. Strong taste
6. Metal
7. Unemployment benefit
8. Egress
9. Musical instrument
10. Too
11. Greek spirit
12. Cry of pain
13. Possess
14. Cupid
15. Cease
16. Jetty

Keyword clue: A football club

SUDOKU

Hard

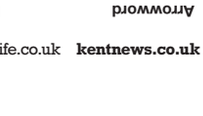
		6				3		
	9		2		4		7	
1								9
6				1				8
	2		8		9		5	
9				5				3
5								7
	6		3		7		9	
		2				4		

Easy

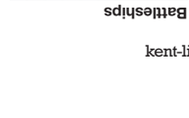
		2		3	7		8	
	1			6			4	2
6	8	7	4		2			
							1	
5		4	1	7	9	8		
1						5		
		3			1	4	6	7
	5			9				8
7	2		8	4		1		

Solutions

Arrowword



Battleships



Double Crossword
Cryptic
Across: 1 Padre; 4 Vanish; 8 Opinion; 9 Cream; 10 Led; 11 Fortress; 13 Book; 14 Flag; 16 Tranquil; 17 Heat; 20 Chide; 21 Embargo; 22 Lighter; 23 Thyme. Down: 1 Problematical; 2 Drive; 3 Edit; 4 Vendor; 5 Recitals; 6 Iceberg; 7 Home sweet home; 12 Conquest; 13 Bearing; 15 Linear; 18 Early; 19 Abut.
Quick
Across: 1 Apart; 4 Formula; 8 Overall; 9 Trial; 10 Eddy; 11 Devotion; 13 Dais; 14 Laze; 16 Reappear; 17 Stop; 20 Alert; 21 Courage; 22 Hatchet; 23 Title. Down: 1 Above reproach; 2 Amend; 3 Tear; 4 Falter; 5 Rational; 6 Utilise; 7 All in one piece; 12 Dispatch; 13 Dialect; 15 Mascot; 18 Tract; 19 Hurt.
Codeword
1=F 2=X, 3=N, 4=Z, 5=H, 6=K, 7=Q, 8=U, 9=C, 10=B, 11=Y, 12=T, 13=P, 14=O, 15=G, 16=R, 17=D, 18=W, 19=M, 20=L, 21=J, 22=I, 23=E, 24=A,
Word Spiral
1 Bled; 2 Dark; 3 Kiln; 4 Newt; 5 Tang; 6 Gold; 7 Dole; 8 Exit; 9 Tuba; 10 Also; 11 Ouzo; 12 Ouch; 13 Have; 14 Eros; 15 Stop; 16 Pier.
Keyword: Everton

Sudoku - Easy

9	4	2	5	3	7	6	8	1
3	1	5	9	6	8	7	4	2
6	8	7	4	1	2	9	5	3
2	7	9	6	8	5	3	1	4
5	3	4	1	7	9	8	2	6
1	6	8	3	2	4	5	7	9
8	9	3	2	5	1	4	6	7
4	5	1	7	9	6	2	3	8
7	2	6	8	4	3	1	9	5

Sudoku - Hard

2	5	6	9	7	1	3	8	4
8	9	3	2	6	4	1	7	5
1	7	4	5	3	8	2	6	9
6	4	5	7	1	3	9	2	8
3	2	7	8	4	9	6	5	1
9	1	8	6	5	2	7	4	3
5	3	9	4	2	6	8	1	7
4	6	1	3	8	7	5	9	2
7	8	2	1	9	5	4	3	6

Isn't it time to pack our bags?

Is chilly old Blighty making you dream of sunshine and adventure? There's bound to be something here to tempt you. Go on. You know you deserve it...

Strengthening their domination of the budget long-haul flight market, Norwegian have announced details of a new London Gatwick to Singapore route launching on September 28. Costing £179 one way (£699 in Premium) the flights will operate four times per week on a 787 Dreamliner. It marks the airline's first foray into Asia. Visit www.norwegian.com

Many parents with school-age children will have already booked summer holidays and winced at the bill. Heathrow Express is helping reduce costs by offering train tickets for £5.50 one way at weekends (£12.10 weekdays) in August – or, indeed, any purchase made 90 days in advance of travel. Kids under 15 travel free any time. Visit www.heathrowexpress.com

Enjoy Singapore by night.
Picture: PA/THINKSTOCK

Late deals

DUBAI: Teletext Holidays (www.teletextholidays.co.uk; 020 3001 0628) offers four nights at the five-star Atlantis The Palm hotel (half-board) from £862pp (two sharing). Includes flights from Heathrow on May 21.
LANZAROTE: Teletext Holidays (www.teletextholidays.co.uk) offers seven nights at the five-star Villa Arrecife (B&B) from £266pp (two sharing). Includes flights from Gatwick on May 22.
BAHAMAS: British Airways Holidays (www.britishairways.com; 0344 493 0120) offers seven nights at the five-star One & Only Ocean Club (B&B) from £2,169 pp (two sharing). Includes flights from Heathrow on select dates in September. Book by May 15.
KENYA: Titan (www.titantravel.co.uk; 0800 988 5873) offers the 10-day 'Grand Safari Kenya' escorted tour from £2,599pp (two sharing) - saving up to £300pp. Includes accommodation and flights from Heathrow on November 3.

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Peter Booth,
Former chair, South Thanet Conservative Association

...but is it helping social mobility?

I HAVE a high regard for the professionalism of Kent on Sunday and its firm grasp of news values.

You can understand my surprise, therefore, when I read a piece recently which rehearsed in detail the discussion of last year's Kent County Council select committee report on social mobility and the Kent Test.

There was nothing new in the article; it even noted that none of the recommendations of Cllr Whittle's report were enforceable, let alone the problem of coaching which can be bought privately by those with the means but is forbidden in state primaries.

It did not ask the question of whether the claim made by Cllr Whittle on BBC South East that over 600 extra working class children would go to grammar schools had in fact happened in 2017.

Could it be that the article was simply an attempt at rallying support for Mrs May's regressive plan for more grammars?

James Parrish,
Tonbridge

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Such blue domination threatens democracy

I WAS hugely disappointed to read the results from last week's Kent County Council election and see such a landslide victory for the Conservatives.

Nobody would realistically have expected anything other than a blue triumph once again but the nature and scale of the win has to be concerning for our great county's democracy.

Regardless of your political persuasion, and whether or not you think the Tories have done a good job in control of the council, having such an enormous majority is extremely worrying.

Council leader Paul Carter's comments [KoS, last week] about having sympathy for those long-serving councillors who lost their seats, while praising the abilities of Liberal Democrat leader Trudy Dean, were interesting to read.

Cynics will suggest it was just lip service and the typical modesty that you have to demonstrate in the wake of a thumping victory.

He claims that you can still have a strong opposition with a handful of councillors from other parties, providing they are of sufficient quality.

I'm sure Cllr Dean and her colleagues do a fine job but no matter how good they are, their voice will be simply drowned out by 67 Conservatives on the other side of the chamber.

How is this possibly democratic?

How are people not frightened by the prospect of having so few members from other parties able to stand up, speak on our behalf and truly challenge the Tories when they make huge decisions that will affect the lives of each and every person in Kent?

Likewise, I think most of us will expect another Conservative win on June 8, but I can only hope it's not a complete sea of blue and that they can be held to account by others.

R Jackson
from Sittingbourne

Research shows Manston support

IT would appear that Simon Crow is unfortunately a compulsive liar ['Silent majority oppose Manston', KoS letters, last week].

Simon says there is no large-scale support for Manston Airport. Let me provide him with some facts.

Research by MORI in 2005 (granted, not within the last 10 years, but Simon wants to be the pedant) evidenced local support.

The study, conduct for Thanet District Council (democratically elected, I understand) as part of the Section 106 agreement consultation, revealed that 85 per cent of respondents were supportive of an expanded Manston Airport, of which 63 per cent were strongly in support.

This is in addition to the 26,524 petition of support for Manston Airport which was handed in to 10 Downing Street in 2014. And the 90 per cent of 822 respondents to RiverOak's non-statutory consultation last year, who were also in support of the airport reopening.

Simon believes that RSP's development consent order attempt is doomed to failure... I'm sorry Simon, I don't seem to recall you being that successful in politics as to become a secretary of state?

He also believes "almost certainly" that RSP's operation will include night flights, when it has been clearly stated from the start that this is not the case.

I suggest that you don't attempt to tar the residents who have lived with, and patently are supportive of, Manston Airport, with such a brush.

Ralph Allison,
Thanet

Airport remains white elephant

WELL said Simon Crow - you do indeed speak for the majority.

The campaigners for Manston re-opening convince themselves that simply by shouting the loudest and dismissing any opposing view makes them right and in the majority. The truth is quite different.

If, indeed, everyone who has lived in Thanet supported the airport then there would be no dispute. There is a dispute because despite all the evidence pointing to its complete failure to succeed as a business before, there are some who can't stand change and would rather see the isle continue to have a giant white elephant at its heart than something more useful.

P Potter,
Birchington

Praise for our Good Samaritan

THE cruelty inflicted on a young spaniel before she was dumped by a busy road [KoS, last week] gave rise to tears of great sadness and grateful thanks to the Good Samaritan who rescued her.

This kind person did not pass by on the other side, but stopped and helped the abandoned, terrified little soul. Compassion at its beautiful best.

Mary McNulty,
Brenchley

Wishing us to fail in Europe talks?

IN KoS on the April 30 edition, it just sneaked in at the last, in the bottom right hand corner, but what a mean little letter from E Pottinger of Hythe.

Anyone reading it could conclude that he would prefer it if Theresa May fails to get a good deal from the EU.

Sadly he seems to be one of many who are almost wishing for failure, presumably so they can claim 'I told you so'. Shame on them all.

Christopher Hudson-Gool,
Maidstone

Tories not really Eurosceptics

IT is clear from the results of the county council elections that many people who had joined Ukip from other parties have decided to trust that the Conservatives will implement the will of the people in relation to Brexit, but I am afraid they may be very disappointed.

In the 1970s the Conservatives declared themselves the party of Europe and for the most part, campaigned to stay a member during the 1975 referendum. Under Margaret Thatcher they signed the Single European Act, while in the 1990s they forced through the Maastricht Treaty and joined the ERM. The Conservatives frequently pretend they are Eurosceptics, but in practice behave otherwise.

Colin Bullen,
Tonbridge

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Knole Park, Sevenoaks

by **Ryan Stephenson from Tunbridge Wells**

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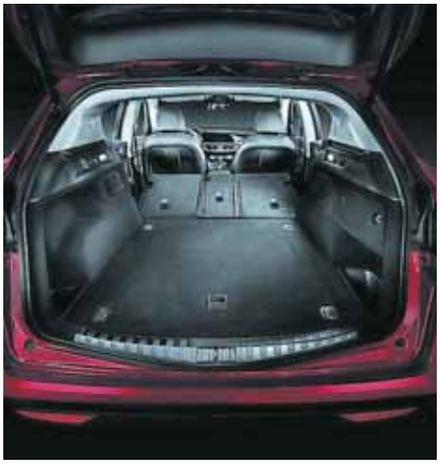

EXPANSION: Alfa Romeo is making its SUV debut this summer

Alfa on SUV bandwagon with the stylish Stelvio

WITH sport utility vehicle sales blossoming, and more premium models coming to market, it's a sector car-makers ignore at their peril.

One of the latest on the SUV bandwagon is Alfa Romeo which makes its debut with the eagerly-anticipated Stelvio in summer.

The Italian car-maker's first ever SUV, the Stelvio features technology used in the company's highly-acclaimed new Giulia sports saloon.

Having initially shown the first edition and top-of-the-range Quadrifoglio at the LA Auto Show, the Italian manufacturer has now revealed a standard version of the off-roader.

It will be available with 2.0-litre turbo petrol and 2.2-litre turbo diesel engines with an eight-speed automatic gearbox and all-wheel drive.

Alfa is known for building sporting cars and the Stelvio is no slouch with the 280hp turbo petrol model going from zero to 62mph in 5.7 seconds and on to 143mph. The 210hp turbo diesel won't be far behind at 6.6 seconds and 133mph.

Three trim levels – Stelvio, Super and Tecnica – will be offered.

Entry Stelvio gets 17in alloy wheels, 8.8in Alfa Connect, DNA drive mode selector, eight-speaker audio system, autonomous braking, lane departure and forward collision warning, parking sensors, cruise control and dusk and rain sensors.

Super adds 18in alloys, techno-leather and fabric seats in a choice of three colours (black, black/brown and black/red) with matching dashboard and door panels and steel door sill inserts.

The sport pack comes with heated sports steering wheel, black, red or brown racing-style, electric, heated leather seats, aluminium inserts and steel pedals.

Diesel-only Tecnica is aimed at business users and includes satellite navigation, brighter, adaptive bi-xenon headlights and electric folding mirrors.

UK pricing will be confirmed closer to it going on sale.

KENT LIFE

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Mature i30 key to Hyundai's sales goal

Hyundai hopes its new i30 will help it become the best-selling Asian car maker in the UK. **Darren Cassey** takes the model out for a spin to see how it shapes up.

Hyundai i30 SE Nav 1.4 T-GDi

Price: **from £16,995**

Engine tested: 1,353cc, 140PS, four-cylinder turbo petrol

Performance: 0-62mph 8.9 seconds; top speed 130mph

MPG: 52.3 combined

CO2 emissions: 124g/km

HYUNDAI plans to be the best-selling Asian car maker in Europe within five years and the i30 is a key pillar for its success.

This new i30 has matured, part of Hyundai's plan to keep buyers in the brand long-term by focusing more on substance than pure aesthetics. For the most part it's succeeded, with refined engines, excellent standard safety kit and a comfortable ride.

A new 1.4-litre turbo petrol engine is lighter and more powerful and frugal than the one it replaces.

The i30 has lost some of the unique styling that made the previous car so appealing – but has sacrificing that bold styling in favour of an improved overall experience paid off? In many ways it has.

Yes, there are still some cheap plastics – on the door cards, for example – but there are lovely squishy materials on the dashboard. The infotainment system is, apparently, 30% faster than before and, while it works well enough, it is a bit simple.

But these are minor gripes against how refined the i30 has become.

The i30 hatchback – along with the Tourer estate – is spacious enough to transport the family with useful rear legroom and a 395-litre boot, rising to 1301 litres with the seat backs folded.

What will also be of comfort is impressive standard safety equipment – autonomous emergency braking with a front collision warning system, lane-keeping assistant, high beam assist and sensors to warn a drowsy driver to take a break. Optional equipment includes blind spot detection, rear cross traffic alert, speed limit reader and adaptive cruise control.

There are three engines but the new 1.4-litre petrol,with six-speed manual and seven-speed dual-clutch automatic transmissions, is expected to be the best seller.

The 120PS 1.0-litre, three-cylinder turbo petrol is a pleasant surprise - even on the motorway, there's enough about it to overtake without ever leaving sixth gear.

A 110PS 1.6-litre turbo diesel also offers both transmissions.

It isn't going to win awards for its thrilling driving experience, but it does everything well enough.

The steering weight is well judged, the ride comfortable, road noise relatively unobtrusive and parking a breeze thanks to a reversing camera on all but entry model.

While some manufacturers chase driving dynamics and others pursue a premium ownership experience, Hyundai is making great strides by doing a little bit of everything while offering good old-fashioned value for money. It's a more grown up proposition than before and is all the better for it.

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Motability

*2017 C-HR Icon 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £595 Advance Payment. Model shown is C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £1,795 Advance Payment, AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift at Nil Advance Payment, Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual at £95 Advance Payment, Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual at £895 Advance Payment and Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual at £295 Advance Payment. Subject to availability. Please note that a total of 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st April and 30th June 2017. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme.

C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 38.1 (7.4), Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1), Combined 47.8 (5.9). CO_2 Emissions 135g/km. AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 Emissions 95g/km. Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 74.3 (3.8), Combined 65.7 (3.8). CO_2 Emissions 110g/km. Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 47.9 (5.9), Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2), Combined 58.9 (4.8). CO_2 Emissions 112g/km. Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 53.3 (5.3), Extra Urban 68.9 (4.1), Combined 62.8 (4.5). CO_2 Emissions 119g/km. All mpg and CO_2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

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- To lead and assume responsibility for the financial administration of the school
- To manage all areas of the school premises not covered by PFI arrangements
- To manage the PFI school premises in liaison with Kier FM, KCC, and all members of the PFI Partnership
- To manage the administration team and keep the support staff services in the school under review
- To attend SLT meetings and take an active part in the discussion and implementation of agreed strategies
- Undertake the role of Health and Safety Representative and manage all aspects of the schools H&S requirements.

The ideal applicant should have…

- A confident and professional attitude.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Experience of dealing with data of a highly confidential and sensitive nature, and awareness of data protection.
- Experience in budget management and financial accounting, and evidence of appropriate qualifications relevant to the post e.g. AAT accreditation.
- A high level of IT literacy with experience of Microsoft packages.
- Working knowledge of SIMS FMS6 and KCC Financial Services Budget Planning Software (BPS).
- Ability to manage and prioritise own workload, and adhere to deadlines.

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Further details and an application form can be obtained from our HR Manager on **01474 566552 ext 1120** or email **k.mcgowan@thamesview.kent.sch.uk.**

Closing date: 23rd May 2017, 9.00am - Interviews: Week Commencing 5th June 2017

CVs without an application form will not be accepted.

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- Audio Typist Qualification (not necessarily medical)
- Minimum 2 years' experience working in a medical environment
- Minimum 2 years' experience in an audio typist role or similar
- Excellent working knowledge of Word/Excel/Outlook

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Danielle Edwards, Business Office Supervisor on 01304 222672

Physiotherapist – Margate and Ashford

Full Time 37.5 hrs per week - Salary - £27,000 - £29,000
Closing Date – 26 May 2017 - Interview Date – TBC
Qualifications and Experience

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Adebayo Tijani, Physiotherapy Manager on 01843 253172

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Telephone: 01304 222687 E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

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IMPORTANT: THIS COMMUNICATION AFFECTS INTERESTS IN PROPERTY
THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(A28 CHART ROAD IMPROVEMENT)
(COMPULSORY PURCHASE) ORDER 2017
The Highways Act 1980
The Acquisition of Land Act 1981

1. Notice is hereby given that the Kent County Council has made on the 11th May 2017 the Kent County Council (A28 Chart Road Improvement) (Compulsory Purchase) Order 2017 under Sections 239, 240 and 250 of the Highways Act 1980. It is about to submit this order to the Secretary of State for confirmation and if confirmed, the order will authorise Kent County Council to purchase compulsorily the land and rights described below for the purpose of;
   a. the improvement of highways forming part of or connected to the A28 Chart Road Ashford in the County of Kent between and including the Tank roundabout and Matalan roundabout to create a two lane dual carriageway with a bridge, junction improvements and improvements for pedestrians and cyclists.
   b. use of land required by the Highway Authority in connection with the improvement of the highway aforesaid
   c. access by the Highway Authority to construct inspect and maintain the works
2. A copy of the order and of the accompanying map may be seen from 11 May 2017 between 9.00am and 5.00pm at Kent County Council, Main Reception, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ; Kent County Council, Highways & Transportation Offices Reception, Henwood Industrial Estate, Javelin Way, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8DH and Kent County Council, Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1AS
3. Any objection to the order must be made in writing to Secretary of State, National Transport Casework Team, Tyneside House, Skinnerburn Road, Newcastle Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7AR or nationalcasework@dft.gsi.gov.uk, quoting the scheme reference, A28 Chart Road, Ashford before **16 June 2017** and should state the title of the order, the grounds of objection and the objector's address and interests in the land. In submitting an objection it should be noted that your personal data and correspondence will be passed to the County to enable your objection to be considered. If you do not wish your personal data to be forwarded, please state your reasons when submitting your objection and the Secretary of State will copy your representations, with your name and address removed to the County, and if there is to be a Public Local Inquiry they will be seen by the Inspector who may give them less weight as a result.

DESCRIPTION OF LAND AND THE NEW RIGHTS

1. All interests in 1230 square metres of grassland and wooded scrubland to the north west of A28 Chart Road and to the north of A28 Matalan roundabout.

2. All interests in 9 square metres of paved area containing electrical pylon infrastructure to the south east of A28 Chart Road and to the north east of A28 Matalan roundabout.

3. All interests in 571 square metres of grassland, wooded scrubland and paved area to the south east of A28 Chart Road and north east of A28 Matalan roundabout.

3A. The right of access over 859 square metres of paved area to construct, inspect and maintain a retaining wall to the south west of former public highway known as Beaver Lane.

4. All interests in 78 square metres of grassland, wooded scrubland and paved area to the south east of Chart Road on former public highway known as Beaver Lane.

4A The right of access over 218 square metres of paved area and wooded scrubland to construct, inspect and maintain a retaining wall to south east of A28 Chart Road on former public highway known as Beaver Lane.

5 All interests in 2629 square metres of grassland, wooded scrubland, paved area and hardstanding to the south east of A28 Chart Road and south of London to Dover railway line.

5A The right of access over 732 square metres of paved area and hardstanding to construct, inspect and maintain a road bridge and a retaining wall to the south east of Chart Road and north east of public highway known as Beaver Lane.

5B The right of access over 223 square metres of paved area and wooded scrubland to construct, inspect and maintain a retaining wall to south east of A28 Chart Road on previous public highway known as Beaver Lane.

6 All interests in 179 square metres of grassed and wooded area within north side of operational corridor of London to Dover railway line.

6A All interests in 56 square metres of grassed and wooded area within south side of operational corridor of London to Dover railway line.

6B The right over 516 square metres of operational corridor of the London to Dover railway line for a road bridge to carry the road over the railway line including the right to construct, keep, inspect and maintain the bridge.

9 All interests, with the exception of Secretary of State for Transport and HS1 Limited's interest, in 1128 square metres of grassland and scrubland to the south east of A28 Chart Road and south of A28 Tank roundabout.

12 All interests in 438 square metres of grassland and wooded scrubland containing underground surface water infrastructure to the south of Sir Henry Brackenbury Road and west of A28 Tank roundabout.

13 All interests in 128 square metres of paved vehicle hardstanding to the south east of A28 Chart Road, north east of London to Dover railway and south west of Brunswick Road.

DATED this 11th day of May 2017

General Counsel
Kent County Council
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

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HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 116

STOPPING UP OF LAND ADJACENT TO HERNE COURT HORN STREET FOLKESTONE

I AM GIVING NOTICE THAT The Kent County Council as Highway Authority for the County of Kent propose to make an application to the Magistrates' sitting at Canterbury Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 6 June 2017 at 10:00 for an Order under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish highway rights on the grounds that they are unnecessary on land adjacent to Herne Court Horn Street as on the plan on deposit.

A copy of the draft order and the plan referred to are on deposit, and can be seen during normal office hours, at the main reception of The Kent County Council at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Any person to whom this Notice has been given or who uses the highway specified or who would be aggrieved by the making of the Order may appear before the Magistrates' Court to raise an objection or make a representation on the application. Any person intending to appear before the Magistrates' Court at the hearing of the application is requested to inform Carissa Humphreys by post to Kent Legal Services, Priory Gate, 29 Union Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1PT, by email highwaydefinitionsearches@kent.gov.uk, or by telephone 03000 416285 before 1 June 2017 quoting reference number LS/21/112049/628.

If you require further information or would like to discuss this matter, please contact Carissa Humphreys using the contact details shown above.

ROGER WILKIN
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS,
TRANSPORTATION AND WASTE

Beaumont key for World Cup hopes

Charlotte Edwards puts her faith in Kent women's captain

Cricket

By Katie Falkingham
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

DOVER cricket star Tammy Beaumont could be the key to England's success at this summer's ICC Women's World Cup, according to former captain Charlotte Edwards.

It promises to be a World Cup to remember for Beaumont having secured her place as England's opening batsman alongside Lauren Winfield, four years after travelling to the last edition in India in 2013.

The first Women's World Cup on home soil for 24 years, England have never lost the tournament on British shores since the inaugural year in 1973 - a record Beaumont and co will not be wanting to spoil come the opening day on June 24.

"Their opening partnership is going to be crucial. What they've done over the last year is formed a really solid partnership and now it's time for them to take that onto the big stage," said Edwards, speaking on the Nissan Trophy Tour.

"Having played in many World Cups myself, I know that having openers who get you off to a good start is crucial and they are going to have a really big role come this tournament. I think they are more than ready to take on that challenge.

"Tammy went to the last 50-over World Cup but didn't really play a lot, but she did really well at the Twenty20 World Cup and she will have taken a huge amount of confidence from that.

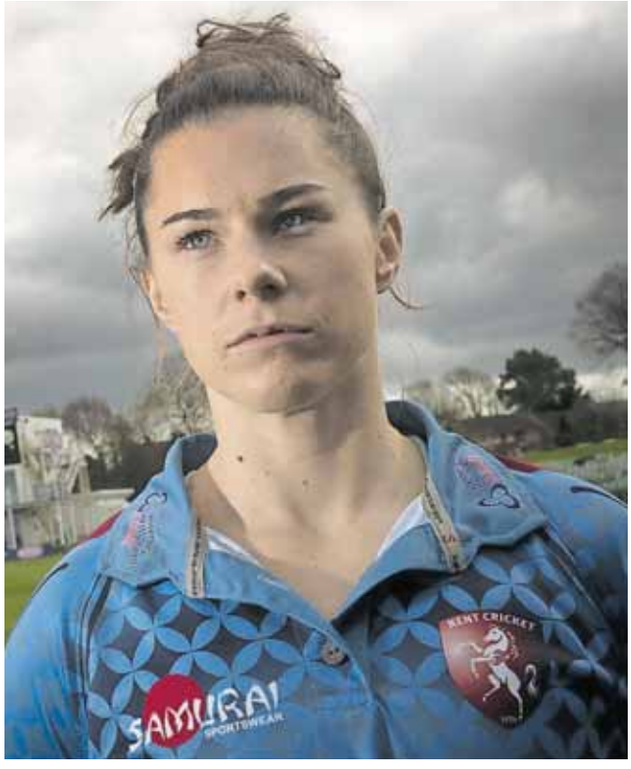
"Hopefully, she will take that confidence into this tournament, and it's one that England are more than capable of being very successful at.

"There will be a lot of pressure on the opening batters, because you need to get the team off to a good start but you also have to score at a rate that means you're moving the game along.

"But Tammy and Lauren have done it a lot, they're used to it and they are a really solid unit."

The ICC Champions Trophy (June 1-18) and ICC Women's World Cup (June 24 – July 23) will both see the best eight ODI teams in the world compete for glory in England and Wales this summer.

Tickets available at icc-cricket.com/tickets



PIVOTAL: Kent's Tammy Beaumont Pictures: ADY KERRY

Sam-Yorke makes Stones switch permanent

Football

MAIDSTONE United have completed their first bit of summer transfer business with the permanent signing of Delano Sam-Yorke.

The forward, 28, spent time on loan at the Gallagher Stadium between January and March last season, racking up three goals in eight appearances.

Between stints at National League rivals Woking, where he started his career, Sam-Yorke gained Football League experience with Cambridge United and in recent seasons has spent time at Lincoln City, Forest Green Rovers and Boreham Wood.

Stones boss Jay Saunders told the club's website this week: "I am very pleased to get this deal done.

HOME: Gallagher Stadium

"After the season ended we made contact and he was keen to come back.

"At the time the loan ended, we were keen to keep him but he went back to Woking and carried on his good form with them.

"He was a big part of turning us round when we started out on that run and it was disappointing to lose him at that time.

"I am looking forward to having him here for pre-season and getting a full season out of him too."

Sam-Yorke added: "After my loan finished this was always a club I wanted to come back to.

"I enjoyed my time here – all the lads, management and fans were great and I am happy to be back."

The Stones finished in a respectable 14th place in their first season back in the National League, after securing promotion in a play-off victory over Ebbsfleet United.

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

Mighty Atom scoops world kickboxing title

KICKBOXING prodigy Phoebe 'The Mighty Atom' Cumiskey has added another title to her growing list of success - this time a world championship.

The Gravesend schoolgirl fought in front of hundreds of fans to take the WKA Junior World Championship belt at the Kent Event Centre in Detling, Maidstone on Saturday.

At 14-years-old, the new world champion has already picked up more than a dozen titles, but this fight, up against 'The Princess with a Punch' Victoria Perkins was described as her toughest yet.

As well as achieving her own personal glory over the weekend, the Thamesview School student also brings the number of world titles won by members of her club, Star Kickboxing, up to 12 since it first opened in Shorne 13-years-ago.

"I'm really, really proud of Phoebe, it was a great atmosphere, over a thousand people were watching and now she's earned the WKA World Championship belt," said coach Leigh Haiworth.

WINNER: Phoebe Cumiskey

CALL: Carl Mitchell. Photo: Hilary Hardy

Mitchell to deputise for injured star Luke

WITH teen sensation Luke Hopkins sidelined after breaking his collarbone at the last World Supersport 300 round at Assen, Hopkins Racing have brought in Carl Mitchell to deputise this weekend.

The 23-year-old rider, who comes from Wingham, near Canterbury, is currently racing in the British Motorcycle Club MRO Minitwin Championship.

He stands tenth overall after three rounds in this 650cc class.

"I have known the Hopkins family since I was racing in the Kawasaki Senior 300 Championship, so I was delighted when I got the call," Mitchell said.

"It will be an incredible experience for me and I have a lot to learn in a short time, but I am feeling confident."

Ravens tie down promising pair

BROMLEY have announced that defender Daniel Johnson and versatile forward George Porter have both signed extended deals at Hayes Lane.

The pair helped steer the Ravens to an impressive 10th placed finish in the National League last season, having only been promoted in the summer of 2015.

Boss Neil Smith told the club's official website this week: "I'm delighted to have Daniel on board for next season, he's had a fantastic season for us, he wants to learn and he will only get better.

"George has been brilliant in every position we've asked him to play, he gives 100 per cent and deserves his new deal."

Meanwhile the club confirmed that Connor Dymond and Lee Minshull have departed.

The club is celebrating its 125th anniversary next season and opened season ticket sales this week.

Starring
Samantha Womack,
Les Dennis &
Carrie Hope
Fletcher

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